Practical Discourses

On Sundry

TEXTS

OF

SCRIPTURE.

Wherein is shewed and made known,
The absolute Necessity for all People

TO

Turn Immediately

Unto the

Lord their GOD.

By RICHARD STAFFORD, formerly a Batchelor of Arts of *Magdalen-Hall* in *Oxford*.

LONDON Printed, and are to be Sold by *Ralph Simpson* at the *Harp* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1695.

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To the Courteous

READER.

THE Subject of this ensuing Book (*A Call to all the Inhabitants of the Earth, to turn immediately to the Lord their God*) is Great and Good. Even what all the Words and Preaching that have ever came forth into the World, in all the several Generations and Countries, have endeavoured at.

For Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3. 8. Besides the Sufferings of Christ, The End and Intent of all the Words which Christ spake, or made known, and so it is the same of all the Transactions which have ever passed between God and Man, are, that he might *bring us* to Himself, who is

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God. Though this hath been indeed effected of ſome few Peculiar People of the ſeveral Generations, yet it hath not been of the Multitude and Generality of Mankind. Notwithſtanding God was manifeſted in the Fleſh, and put to Death in the Fleſh, but quickned in the Spirit for this alone End and Purpoſe. How can it then be expected, that one who is born out of due Time, and the leaſt of all in the Kingdom of God, can, by publiſhing a few words more, accompliſh ſo great a thing, when all the Books and Preaching in the World have not yet done it? Eſpecially when the *Word* it ſelf, which was made Fleſh and dwelt among us, *Full of Grace and Truth*, who ſpake as never Man ſpake, did not ſo bring it to paſs that all ſhould, though ſome did believe on him. Far be it therefore from me to expect or imagine, That this little Book or Treatiſe of mine, will ever have ſo great an Effect.

But it is only offered as another *Mite* to be thrown into the Treaſury of Divine Truths. It is the Thoughts of one ſingle Creature which have aroſe in his

Mind, whereby himself is actually perſwaded to God and good things, and to turn unto the Lord *Immediately*, Luke 12. 36. As *Paul* conferred not with Fleſh and Blood, but immediately went to *Jeruſalem*: So for my part I would utterly lay aſide all Carnal and Worldly Conſiderations, and immediately give up my ſelf to the Guidance of the Lord, as he leads me in the way to *Jeruſalem*, that is above, whitherſoever that way goes. And I do deſire that theſe ſame Thoughts may be publiſhed and made known abroad; Out of this Hope and Expectation, If Peradventure the God of all Truth, who perſwadeth us throughout our Life, in all the ſeveral Circumſtances and Conditions thereof, That we may be able to perſwade other Men and Women by the very ſame Thoughts wherewith our ſelves are perſwaded of God. *He faſhioneth the Hearts of the Sons of Men alike*, Pſal. 33. 15. and it is commonly ſeen, That by what one is perſwaded, another under the like Thoughts and Circumſtances is *Perſwaded* alſo. And if the like things

were made known unto, and believed by the mixt Multitude and generality of Mankind, as is to the elect People and real Servants of God, in all outward Likelihood and Probability; They would also be brought over unto God.

To this alone End and Purpose are these Words laid before Men, that whosoever will may read. And for such who will not read, the Saying among the *Latins* is, *Pertinacia nullum Remedium Posuit Deus*; So we the Ministers of his Word cannot tell what to say to it; Nor do we know how to help and remedy it though we would never so fain. But we can only warn such, *Behold ye Despisers, and Wonder and Perish.* Such are in real danger to fall under the same Doom as the Sons of *Eli* and *Amaziah* did. *Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the Voice of their Father, Because the Lord would slay them.* 1 Sam. 2. 25. But Amaziah *would not hear, for it came of God that he might deliver them into the hand of their Enemies.* 2 Chron. 25. 20. And so it is. They that will not Hear,

Read

Read and Receive the Words of Inſtruction, Knowledge and Reproof. It is a certain foregoing ſign, that ſuch will be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.

It is commonly alledged that there is no new thing under the Sun; and there is nothing ſaid (eſpecially in Books) but what hath been ſaid before; for my part I would endeavour ſomewhat further in what I publiſh to the World (which as yet is not ſo clearly made known in other Books and Sermons) or otherwiſe I would not publiſh at all. Or at leaſt I would *ſeek out acceptable Words, and that which is written may be upright, even Words of Truth*, Eccleſ. 12. 10. If Words, or rather Sentences of Truth are indeed brought forth, Although they be without Method and Connexion (as there are very many of this ſort in the following Treatiſe,) yet they are never the leſs worth for want of that: All one as pieces of Gold or ſo many Pearls are not the leſs valuable, although they be not linked and

chained together. Again, Although my writing here is not with enticing words of Mans Wisdom, nor yet according to the exact Rules of Oratory; But things are expressed so plainly, that they may be understood by the meanest Capacity: Nevertheless God is more glorified, and the Reader may be more edified hereby, then in (what is called) more Learned and Polite Discourses.

It was both a puzling and also a sudden Question of *Pilate*, *What is Truth?* To me it seems to be the expressing forth the Nature of things as they are, with the Connexion between themselves, and how they pertain to us Men. Things are again divided into Visible and Invisible, Present or Future. Now the present and visible things soon pass away and are but little. But the great Object of what is commonly called *Divine Truth* (which is the subject of the ensuing Book) is only invisible and future things, which are the only thing needful, even the greatest and nearest Concern. All things are Gods, for he created them; and the principal Mat-

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ter here insisted on throughout the whole, is what God requires of Man, with a Word of Exhortation to enforce him the more to the Obedience and Observance of the same, and more especially what God will do unto us Men and Women, the reasonable Inhabitants of this Earth, both hereon in the latter days, and also after that they are gone off from this Stage of the middle part of the World.

As to that great Controversie which the Lord hath had for so many Generations past and foregoing, concerning their universal Obedience to *Himself their God*, Psal. 50. 7. which all the words that ever came forth and were made known in the World heretofore, have not (I do not say could not) *accomplished and brought to pass*, How it will be all done suddenly and at an instant, by the pouring out of the Spirit upon us from on High, may be seen in Page 295. As also that there will be an end of all Wars and of all Persecution, is shewed in Page 285,288. which will be a very great Good to Mankind:

So

So that the making known these things, will tend more to the real Benefit of Man, than *spending their Money for that which is not Bread*, and their Labour for that which satisfieth not, or consuming so much time in other and vain Things.

I need not say much more by way of Preface and Introduction, But here I shall only add this further, That according as God is now pleased to accompany and Seal these Truths with the droppings and distillings of that same *Spirit*, which hereafter he will pour out. And according as that self-same Spirit giveth Understanding (for it is too common that the Works and Things of God are *not understood*, Psal. 106. 7. Acts 7. 25.) for these things are Spiritually discerned. As also there is a need of a distinguishing Judgment, as to discern and know which are the *real Truths of God*, from the Imaginations or Sayings of other meer Humane Writers. Again, According as the following Words of Truth do approve themselves to the Hearts and Consciences

ences of the Real and *Inward* (see *Rom.* 2. 29.) and not so much to the Nominal and outward Christians; And according as Care, Endeavour, Industry and Diligence, are used in the publishing and making them known, so accordingly they will meet with Acceptance or Rejection from the World.

THE

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Practical

Practical Diſcourſes:

OR AN

Earneſt Call to all the Inhabitants of the Earth to turn immediately unto the Lord their God.

As the ſame is opened and alledged from what is written, *Pſal.* 18. 43, 44, 45.

Thou haſt delivered me from the Strivings of the People, thou haſt made me the Head of the Heathen; A People whom I have not known, ſhall ſerve me. As ſoon as they hear of me, they ſhall obey me. The Strangers ſhall fade away, and be afraid out of their cloſe Places.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction.

IF all Mankind of all Generations and Countries were now ſummoned together, and there was a Voice that could reach them all; as God will at the laſt Day *gather all Nations, and will bring them down into the*

Valley of Jehoshaphat, *and will plead with them there*, Joel 3. 2. By his own Power and uttering forth his Voice: It would be proper to preach and make known these Words unto them. But in the mean time he hath shewed the Way, and he doth require it of us under the Danger and Penalty of Disobedience, that all we should *publish the Word*, Psal. 68. 11. which he hath given us, as far as we can. And he hath so ordered that the *still Voice* of his Spirit should be sent forth into the Hearts of many People. All things are to be done as far as he hath pointed out, and put into our Power: All we should help whatever we can towards the Furtherance thereof; for the Work of the Lord is common, and should be the joint Endeavour of all his Servants.

Ever since the World began, and down until this Time, and what further remains on, the Kingdom *of Heaven suffereth Violence*, and the violent take it by Force. According to our Ability we ought severally to the utmost of, yea, and beyond our Power to be continually doing the Will of God; bring Glory unto his Name, to further and carry on with all our Might and Diligence the *common Salvation*, to endeavour, by all Means possible, yea, our selves are to act and suffer an holy Violence, that People may be more brought over and *added unto the Lord*. As God is to be loved with all the Soul and with all the Strength,

and

and with all the Heart, and with all the Mind: So all things we have, or can do, are to be laid out and resolutely put forth (without any more Intermission or Weariness than what is absolutely necessary and requisite) in his Service and doing good unto others. None are to be idle; but as we are warned of, so ought we to avoid to our utmost, that we fall not under the Doom of the unprofitable Servant. *For behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me to give to every Man according as his Work shall be*, Rev. 22. 12. And we having but a short Time, might learn this Wisdom from the Serpent, to improve this our Time to the utmost Advantage, to oppose and destroy his Kingdom, to *turn People from Darkness to Light*, and *from the Power of Satan unto God*, and to recover those that are already taken *captive at his Will*. As he walketh about seeking whom he may devour, so is the Will of the most high God, that his Servants should *run to and fro that knowledge may be increased*, Dan. 12. 4. that many may be converted and saved. And when each Person is converted, then he is to *strengthen his Brethren*, and to endeavour what lieth in him, that others may be converted also; and so on. The like Care and Endeavour is to be used and spread abroad, that *all Men may be saved and come to the Knowledge of the Truth*. Whatever is dictated to any, and is tending to good, the same is to be complied with and

actually done, and ſo on whatever can be reached further, or apprehended more.

Nothing is created in vain, nor yet ſhould lye ſtill and remain to no Purpoſe, but the ſame ſhould anſwer the very Ends for which each thing was made and ordained. This is to be obſerv'd, not only in natural and common things, but neceſſarily and more eſpecially in eternal and ſpiritual things, and ſo we ſhould *preſs unto the Mark of the high calling*. God hath created and left us in ſuch a State as to prove whether we will do that to which he hath already enabled us, and doth require. If we do not, it is at our Fault and Peril, and we ſhall be ſubject unto Loſs and Miſery. But yet the *Eyes which were made to ſee*, ſhould and may ſee; the Ears to hear; and who have Hearts and Underſtandings given to perceive, they *may perceive*, Deut. 29. 4. As Men profeſs themſelves to be Servants of the moſt high God, ſo they ſhould do his revealed Will, and perform what he hath ſaid in his ſtanding and written Word, by which he now ſpeaketh from Heaven, all one as if we heard outwardly his Voice. And then they ſhould *take hold of the Skirt of their Neighbours*, and cauſe them to go and hear the Word of the Lord. Uſing the like Endeavour and Perſwaſion drawn only from divine Arguments and Conſiderations, as the wicked, and Companions in Sin, do entice one another by their Arts and Means:

Means: Yea, and they ſhould ſo lay hold of them that they ſhall not go back unleſs they rent ſome Piece of their Garments, that they may as it were be *compelled*, Luke 14. 25. to their own Good and Salvation; that if they will ſtill refuſe and give back, it may be with greater Difficulty and Striving: And if they do reſiſt the firſt or ſecond Importunity, yet by continual asking and putting in Mind, the ungodly and wicked may be *wearied*, Luke 18. 5. till they firſt hear, and then they will come to receive and yield unto the Words of eternal Life. *Then the Eyes of the Blind ſhall be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf ſhall be unſtopped*, Iſa. 35. 5. *They alſo that erred in Spirit ſhall come to Underſtanding, and they that murmured ſhall learn Doctrine*, Iſa. 29. 24. However, at firſt this may be eſteemed uncivil and troubleſome to the Neighbourhood and Community, yet is very conſiſtent and agreeable with the Welfare and Happineſs of Mankind, for many to joyn together and ſeverally, that it may be no ſtrange nor ſingular thing, to endeavour in all good Conſcience, and the greateſt Earneſtneſs to bring People off from Ignorance, Sloth and Deadneſs in Sin, to Knowledge, be doing good and the ſpiritual Life; that coming out of carnal Security, they may diſcern and follow the things which belong to their Peace, and thence lead them up to the holy Hill. It can be no Harm to refuſe

any from the Place of Torment, to pull him (though never ſo much againſt his Will) like a Brand out of the Fire.

Ye that make Mention of the Lord, keep not Silence; And give him no Reſt till he make Jeruſalem *a Praiſe in the Earth*, Iſa. 62. 6, 7. So we are to do the like, and endeavour, what we can, to gather the People, and make them *meet and ready*, a *People prepared for the Lord*. Each Maſter of a Family may order the Word of Exhortation and Inſtruction to be read unto his whole Houſe: Or where he is backward or negligent, then the Wife of his Boſom, or a Son, or a Servant who is rightly diſpoſed towards God, they ought to give the Houſe no Reſt, but be urgent and importunate till it be made known unto, and underſtood by them. *That as our God hath given Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little*, Iſa. 28. 10. It being doubly ranked, and ſeveral times enforced, yea, and repeated over and over: So it is to be continually inculcated till it hath gotten the Victory over all rebellious and ſtubborn Hearts.

And when this or the like Method is uſed (as the Spirit ſhall direct or incline) in our own Nation and every Part thereof, we may *aſſuredly gather*, Acts 16. 10. that God hath called us to preach the Goſpel unto others. *Surely the Iſles ſhall wait for me, and the Ships of* Tarſhiſh *firſt, to bring thy Sons from far, their Silver*

Silver and Gold with them, unto the Name of the Lord thy God, And to the holy one of Israel, *because he hath glorified thee. And the Sons of Strangers shall build up thy Walls, and their Kings shall minister unto thee,* Isa. 60. 9, 10. It hath been the Way and Method of God's gracious dealing towards the Children of Men, to help towards their Good by little and little, to bring them on from less to greater, and still to make beter and *increase*, Psal. 115. 14. their Condition. Who first laid the Foundations of the Earth, and ordained the gathering together of Waters; who settled the habitable Parts of the Earth, and divided Country from Country by Rivers, Seas, and Rocks, he could have made it all one Continent and Plain: Who gave Life and Motion in such a Degree as now the doth, he might have raised it to what Pitch of Activity and Speed he pleased: By the same Power we might have been made to walk on the Waters, or to ride on an Horse through the Deep. But he hath established things in wonderful Wisdom and Counsel for great and excellent Ends, even in those which seem ordinary and common. *Seeing many things, but thou observest not,* Isa. 42. 20. As God made every thing, so he gave Man that Skill and Knowledge to build Boats and Vessels for the Water, and to send forth from one Place to another. Now consider the utmost End and Design of Navigation, whether to keep Intercourse and Correspondence with other Nati-

ons, Desire of Gain and their Commodities, or to maintain the busie Nature of Man in Employment: Yet there is one thing greater than all; that is, to bring down God from above by the Word of Faith, which we preach; that People may be more acquainted with him, to give them Knowledge of Salvation, and tell them of the greater Communion and gathering together of his People, which shortly will be more than hath been ever since the World began; and in the mean while all things are to be done which may hasten and make ready towards the Accomplishment thereof: To make known the *things which belong to their Peace*, and their eternal Exaltation and Happiness, which is more than all the Gold of *Ophir*. To assure them that they shall, and tell them the Way how they may live blessed for ever, which is more than the best temporal Livelihood: This is the best Use and End of Navigation.

If we did look up and could see the Heavens opened, that vast and wide Place to which the great and wide Sea is not so much as a small single Pool of Water is now to the whole Ocean. Every thing above is so astonishing, that all the Wonders of the Deep are not so much as the purling of a little Brook or Stream. *To see the King in his Beauty, and to behold the Land that is very far off*, Isa. 33. 17. is infinitely more delightful than the Gaudiness of Eastern Emperors, or all the pleasant Places of all the Earth. Our Souls shall mount

up

up there, after they have for ſome time dwelt in this earthly Cottage. They now are weary of, and get above all things here, and do apprehend the other by Faith which will be revealed in Sight and Enjoyment. God doth all things in his own Order. *O that thou wouldſt rent the Heavens, that thou wouldſt come down*, Iſa. 64. 1. He might open and diſplay his own Majeſty, and make himſelf ſeen in his Glory; or he might infuſe his Word and Spirit immediately into the Hearts of every Soul of every Nation under Heaven to give them Knowledge and Aſſurance that theſe things are ſo. But he hath ſpoken to the World by the Prophets, his Son, and Apoſtles, who lived in the Land of *Judea*, and others are to receive it from them, and to publiſh it forth throughout the World. Thus our Lord and Saviour gave Commiſſion and Direction. And accordingly his Apoſtles did travel about on Horſes and Ships unto the Places afar off to make known theſe things, and ſo their Words went out unto the End of the World. But we, according to his good and gracious Promiſes, do expect a more univerſal preaching of his Word, and ſending of his Spirit. As *He is the Confidence of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that are are afar off upon the Sea*, Pſal. 65. 5. So he will manifeſt and make himſelf fully known unto them. Our ſelves as yet know him by Faith, we hear of him with

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the Hearing of the Ear, we ſee it written of him, we underſtand and perceive from within, but the Words of Life and Knowledge may be ſent and publiſhed unto others. By the Help of Ink and Paper we may ſpeak to thoſe whom we have not ſeen, and to the Nations afar off.

Men and Brethren of every Country of the Earth, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the Patriarch *David, that he is both dead and buried:* Whilſt he lived, he ruled over one ſingle Nation of ſmall Extent, and he was likely to have been thruſt from that by his Son *Abſolom*, but the Lord ſuſtained him. He had no forreign and new Conqueſts, nor did he enlarge Territories. Himſelf was not made the Head of the Heathen, nor did People whom he knew not, ſerve him. Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an Oath to him, that of the Fruit of his Loins according to the Fleſh, God would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his Throne; He ſeeing this before, ſpake of the Kingdom of Chriſt, that it ſhould extend over all: He ſhall have Dominion alſo from Sea to Sea, and from the *River unto the Ends of the Earth*, and ſo as is further ſaid in the Seventy Second and Eightieth Pſalms.

Thou haſt delivered me from the Strivings of the People. It is the general Stile of Propheçies to run in the Preſent or Preterpefect Tenſe; which ſaith things are ready or have been,

been, when it ſpeaks of things to come, which denotes the great Truth and Certainty thereof, that it will as really be as if it was at this preſent Moment, or had been already fulfilled. It is the Word and Promiſe of the high and lofty one, who inhabiteth Eternity, to whom all things are preſent and before him: Who ſits above, and hath in his Power the Times and Seaſons. He is above all Difference and Diſtinction of Times, but according to our Capacity and Underſtanding, he expreſſeth himſelf in this wiſe:

Yet have I ſet my King upon my holy Hill of Sion. *Ask of me and I ſhall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for thy Poſſeſſion*, Pſal. 2. 6, 8. God hath eſtabliſhed his Worſhip and Kingdom by little and little, and ordained that thoſe who ſubmit unto it, ſhould do it freely. It was a conſiderable Time before he brought his firſt Begotten Son into the World, and then he endued him with ſuch Power and Excellency, that others might believe on him as ſent from God, and come to ſerve and honour him; for whoſo doth honour the Son, he doth honour the Father alſo: All People had ſufficient Reaſon and Invitation to come unto him, yet none is forced. His Throne was ſet up in the appointed Place, *for the Law ſhall go forth of* Sion, *and the Word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem. *Micah.* 4. 2. Every Man or Woman that will,

will, may be obedient to it. We are to fear the *Name of the Lord*, whom we have heard of; and we are to comply with his Will which is made known unto us. Herein is the Kingdom of God superiour and different from that of Men; for we ought to obey him that is invisible before those whom our Eyes see. And it was never known nor heard of among the Children of Men, that those did exercise Authority whom none of their Subjects ever saw. God is a Spirit, and is manifested unto and in our Spirits, and he is also evident to the outward Eye; for this sees the things which his Hands hath made. Our selves do inhabit in and discern the Temple wherein also he dwells, and which he fills with his Presence. *Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth is his Foot-stool*: So that we have as great Assurance that the Lord is King, as that there are Governours over such particular Nations, or as a Son is assured that he had a Father, or a Servant that he hath a Master: And there should arise the same continued Obligation of Duty towards our God, as is actually given to those earthly Relations, according to what is written, *Unto thee lift I up mine Eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens. Behold, as the Servants look unto the Hand of their Masters, and as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Mistress: So our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have Mercy upon us*, Psal. 123. 1, 2. *A Son bo-*

honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter: If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour, and if I be a Maſter, where is my Fear, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts? Mal. 1. 6. which is the moſt reaſonable and natural thing in the World; *for in him we live, and move, and have our Being; as certain alſo of your own Poets have ſaid, for we are alſo his Offſpring*: For as much then as we are the Offspring of God, we ought in all Times and in all Places to give all Honour and Obedience unto him. And ſo accordingly we ſhould, if we had the Knowledge, and did not forget God that formed us, nor receive in wrong Prejudices and falſe Apprehenſions of his ſupreme and moſt excellent Being. Our Ignorance, Corruption, and Satan's Temptation make us turn aſide, and then ſome ſtrange Imaginations make us unwilling to return. All which might be diſcovered to be Falſhood, Miſtake, and Error ſo ſoon as they are fully known.

Where God calls unto the Children of Men, they ſtruggle and give backwards, and are not willing to come, and this is the *Strivings of the People*. This Manner of Speech is not intended of Heathens, and ſuch as have not known nor heard of God (for they are expreſſed afterwards) but it is meant of thoſe who go under the Name of *Iſraelites*, whom he vouchſafes to ſtile his own People. Theſe have ſome Faith and Knowledge, but it is dark

dark and imperfect; they conceive ſomewhat of God, but it is Error and Falſhood; they apprehend ſomewhat of his Law, but not fully; and thence comes to be in them an evil Heart of ſtanding off from God. The general Deceivableneſs of Heart which keeps them off (for there is a Thouſand Kind of little Surmiſes, which may be anſwered in like manner) is here reduced unto theſe Three Particulars.

1. They think, that themſelves are as it were forced unto Obedience, and they do not love to be compelled againſt their Will.

2. Some imagine that they have ſo grievouſly offended God that they dare not to come.

3. Which is the principal Reaſon of all, the Generality of People think, that if they ſubmit preſently unto the Obedience of God, they ſhall be Loſers, and diſappointed of ſo much Pleaſure, Profit, and Conveniency in the mean while: They ſhall miſs of ſo much imagined Happineſs, and fall into Sowerneſs and Miſery.

If theſe Three Points can be cleared, and the Heart of Man throughly ſatisfied as to each of them, then it is juſt and equal that he ſhould not defer one Moment longer, but turn immediately unto the Lord their God.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Here that Propoſition is at Large diſcuſſed, That People are not forced and compelled to the Obedience of God, but they are left herein to their own free Choice or Refuſal.

FOR the firſt, Cannot they imagine, That if it was the Mind of God, that any ſhould be compelled to his Service, could not he have brought the whole World unto his Obedience before this Time, when they have continued for ſome Thouſands of Years in their Iniquity and Tranſgreſſion? He, who *faſhioneth their Hearts alike*, Pſal. 33. 15. *and knoweth our Frame*, Pſal. 103. 14. could alſo have put into us the ſame inſtant Neceſſity and Inclination to his Worſhip and Service, as to our Meat and Drink, that without it we ſhould grow faint and periſh. He could have determined the Powers of Soul only one Way, as in Brutes, and have moved them towards his Law and Will, as they are carried by Inſtinct to natural and ſenſible things; he could have implanted into every one that ſtrong Deſire of following the thing that good is, as after Life and Breath; and they ſhould abhor and flee from Evil with the like Care and Earneſtneſs as from Death and Deſtruction. He could have ſo hedged up all our Ways, that it were not poſſible to go from him, if we were never ſo eagerly bent on Backſliding, no more than

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we can now get out of a ſtrong Priſon. He might have ſo compaſſed us in of every Side, that we could not avoid fulfilling his Command, no more than any one doth now eſcape from under a Guard. Neither can we hide from him who is every where and in all Places. He might give us as ſenſible Evidence of his taking Knowledge of all our Ways, as a King doth of any Treaſon committed in his Preſence, for which we ſhould incur his ſevere Wrath immediately. *Verily thou art art a God that hideſt thy ſelf, O God of* Iſrael, *the Saviour*, Iſa. 45. 15. and ſo haſt done ever ſince the World began, to ſee what the Children of Men will do. God hath diſcovered himſelf no more than what was neceſſary for to exerciſe our Faith and Trial. He hath juſt made known his Name and Power amongſt Men; but further, it is left unto them how they will carry themſelves towards *the Lord, their Strength and Redeemer.*

It is a wonderful thing to conſider, how the God who made and filleth, and is all things, ſhould yet be ſo little manifeſted unto Men! That he who is all *Brightneſs* and *Glory*, ſhould not be ſeen among us. That he who made and faſhioned us, in whom we live and move and have our Being, ſhould not be perceived by us: That when he filleth Heaven and Earth with his Preſence, yet any ſhould live without God in the World. *Surely Darkneſs hath covered the Earth, and groſs Darkneſs the People.* The Sun gives

gives Light upon it by Day, and the Moon by Night, and yet there is a greater Darkneſs round about which the dull Element perceives not, there is yet a worſe and greater *Obſcurity* in thoſe who ſee and walk therein. Strange! that it ſhould not be yet univerſally fulfilled in all People. *At that Day ſhall a Man look to his Maker, and his Eyes ſhall have Reſpect unto the holy One of* Iſrael, *Iſa.* 17. 7. for he might ſee him with the *Eyes of his Underſtanding being enlightened*, all one as he doth with his bodily Eye, ſee the Works of God, and the Earth which we tread on. By the Air which a Man breaths and moves in, he might have a Senſe and Reſemblance of him who is *inviſible*; who doth alſo *beſet him behind and before*, and is with him in his going out and coming in, and is acquainted with all his Ways. There is no going from his Spirit and Preſence. *If I aſcend up into Heaven, thou art there: If I make my Bed in Hell, behold, thou art there: If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right Hand ſhall hold me*, Pſal. 139. 8, 9, 10. And ſo he doth equally in the narrow Places of our Abode. Whether we be on a Journey, or a walking in our Chamber, or in the lower Parts of our Houſe, whether we be alone or in Company, God is all along preſent with us, but through Imperfection the Soul is not well intent on ſeveral things together, and his Creatures too often make us forget the

Creator. As we behold them, we are unmindful of him that is invisible; their Talk and Discourse too often make us not think of his Word and Law. Nevertheless, these failings might be rectified, and we might have a continual Sense of him and of his Commandments, that we might not fall nor offend. But here it is to be admired, that when there are so many things to bring to the knowledge and Remembrance of our God, yet Mankind for several Generations, should be so fottishly ignorant and unmindful of him. Every thing we see, taste, and handle, is his Work and Creature, which should renew the Sense of the Creator; yet all these are made an Occasion to forget him, the least conceiving or inward reasoning would instantly have led up to the Apprehension of him. That it must be some one who made all these things; for even as to the Houses which we inhabit, we must conclude that some one did build them, though it was before we were born: And so this great House of the World must needs have been framed by him who built all things; and he that built all things is God. *Through Faith we understand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear*, Heb. 11. 3. The Heavens continue standing as they were from the Days of the Creation, yet that once was, and must needs have been. But then further, the very Continuance and upholding of

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the things created, doth moſt plainly demonſtrate this *eternal Power and Godhead*. For *I lift up my Hand to Heaven and ſay, I live for ever*, Deut. 32. 40. This may be clearly ſeen, for the vaſt Roof of the Sky is kept up without any mighty Beams or Pillars. *He ſtretcheth forth the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing*; but then it abides only by his Support. He upholds all things by the Word of his Power. He forms and gives Life and Breath to the ſeveral things therein. They are born, move a little between, and then they die one after another. Hereby, giving us to ſignifie that himſelf alone is eternal and immortal, without Beginning or any Ending. They increaſe, fade, and decay, which is a manifeſt Token of Difference from his own infinite Perfection, Fullneſs, and Unchangeableneſs. They are divided and ſeparated from one another, which again diſtinguiſhes from him who is all in all, whoſe *Spirit filleth the World*. They are very little and ſmall, which is another Diverſity from his infinite Greatneſs. They are contemptible and weak, wherefore to him alone belongs all Honour, Glory, Power and Strength: He hath ſhewed himſelf to be the Lord and a jealous God, by the very Frame of things, which have been as it were of ſet Purpoſe ſo contrived, that they ſhould not draw off the leaſt Glory, Excellency, and Admiration from the great Creator and ſupreme Majeſty of Heaven and Earth.

How all theſe have been abuſed and ſtifled by the moſt deteſtable Ignorance and Folly, by the utmoſt Malice and Perverſeneſs of Mankind, and by the manifold Devices of Satan, and by ſundry other Ways, will be one Day particularly diſcloſed, when all things ſhall be reckoned up in order as they have been done and tranſacted in this Earth. Things have been turned and perverted juſt contrary to what they were firſt intended. O ſtrange Sottiſhneſs and Blindneſs! O wicked Folly! There is a Rehearſal of it throughout the Thirty Second Chapter of *Deuteronomy*; and the Reaſon of all may be ſomewhat underſtood from the Twentieth Verſe, *And he ſaid I will hide my Face from them, I will ſee what their End ſhall be, for they are a very froward Generation, Children in whom is no Faith.* If God did not hide himſelf, or if they had but Faith ſtill to apprehend him, it is impoſſible that Mankind ſhould be ſo unmindful or negligent of the things pertaining to him.

For they who are thankful for common Mercies and daily Benefits, and catch at every little thing; if theſe did clearly apprehend how all things are God's, and themſelves have from him whatever they enjoy, they would alſo give the ſame continual Thanks unto him, and having this Earneſt and Pledge, they would ſeek diligently after the great things of God. Who admire at every little Novelty, they would much more be aſtoniſhed at the Wonders

Wonders of his Majeſty. Who are ſo careful to pleaſe their Superiours according to the Fleſh, leaſt they ſhould receive Injury or Oppreſſion; and alſo they are ſincere and loving towards them, if they receive Good and Benefits from them; theſe ſame People would be alike obedient and fearful to diſpleaſe the Lord their Maker, unto whom the Inhabitants of the Earth are but as Graſhoppers, or a Compapany of creeping Worms. If we were made alike throughly ſenſible that as God doth good, ſo he can puniſh more than one Man doth to another, there would be the like Reverence and Awe unto him. It is certain that he doth give us already whatever we enjoy, and is not that which we have conſtantly; even from our Youth up, more than thoſe little Additions of Kindneſs we have now and then from another, and conſequently ſuch do require greater Gratitude and Love. And then what he is further pleaſed to promiſe, doth not that infinitely exwhatever can be thought of, or named, or ceed had here: May we not wiſely and with Advantage renounce what now might be had, if it doth hinder from the Hope and Expectation of that, as that ſame Word (which makes known the great Salvation, and the Means how to obtain it) doth expreſly declare. One might run over many Particulars which would manifeſtly ſhew, That if the things of God were really believed and conſidered of, there would be the ſame, yea, more earneſt Care

and Labour after them, than after the things of this Earth. And we should perform our Duty to him in all things which he requires of us, as we give Honour and do Offices one to another.

But this hidden Mystery of the Kingdom of God, and of the Divine Dispensation, hath puzzled the Understandings and Actings of Men. Indeed Man hath a confused apprehension of things, but he knows little distinctly, and acts yet worse towards his Maker. Either he doth not know, or not believe, or he is inconstant, and imperfect as to both. Or when he knows the hindrances, he wilfully gives way, and is kept off by them; and when he sees the Temptations, he doth yield unto them; or an unseen Enemy fills him with imaginations and excuses, and a *deceived heart hath turned him aside*, Isa. 44. 20. We should be exceeding careful about our Understanding, to have it informed with true and right Thoughts. If we may rightly apprehend the Dispensation of God's Kingdom, and the Nature of things before us, which pertain to us. It is called the Mystery of the Kingdom; and therefore we should Pray for the Spirit to search and unfold it, to get it throughly known and revealed. If we may use such a familiar comparison, that as by the like Arts and Policy Men get a temporal Kingdom, Preferment and Riches; so we might endeavour after those things above. Which is done by Knowledge, Industry, and a resolute putting forth. The first instructs in the

the right way, the others ſet a going and moving forwards. We ſhould firſt Pray, and ſeek unto God, *That he would lead us forth by the right way, that we may go to the City of Habitation*, Pſal. 107.7. and ſo in all our Works and Labor in order thereto. And then it may be obſerved how things are eſtabliſhed, and alſo to be had upon foregoing means. Here it behoves to learn diligently, and to know exactly what are the true and right means; for want of which ſo many do miſcarry in their Deſigns and Enterprifes, as our ſelves do perceive afterwards; which if throughly known before, the thing might have been accompliſhed. And alſo we muſt underſtand what means are Juſt, or not, lawful or unlawful; for we are to confine our ſelves only unto the firſt, and avoid the other. *For I the Lord love Judgment, I hate Robbery for Burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in Truth*, Iſa. 61.8. *His work is perfect, for all his ways are Judgment; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity; juſt and right is he*, Deut. 32. 4. And therefore we are to refrain from all manner of ſin, nor to uſe any indirect Art or Guile: But if any ſuch is offered or ſuggeſted, it is to be looked upon as a Temptation of Satan, to hinder or delay the Work, and to make us part with our Integrity. There is near the ſame Connexion and Eſtabliſhment of all things throughout the whole Creation; and as we ſee the good things of the Earth are had by Wiſdom, honeſt Labour and Diligence.

So we are to have Grace and Knowledge that we may obtain the heavenly good things, and ſo ſeek diligently after them. The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the violent take it by force. *Only he who now letteth, will let, untill he be taken out of the Way*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 7. And as he hinders all that he can, ſo we ſhould watchfully obſerve his Devices in order to fruſtrate and defeat them. When we have fully heard what promotes and helps us forward to eternal Happineſs; this we are to do with all our Might and Power, and alſo we ſhould decline what hinders, or reſolutely work contrary to that: Even from the Reſiſtances of Satan, we may get Strength and advance further. It may be ſo over-ruled and ordered, that the Light which he would ſeek to put out, may ſhine yet more abroad; that the Truth which he would ſtifle or wrap up may be yet more diſplayed; that all his Devices may fall back upon himſelf, and he may loſe by what he thought would promote his Kingdom. *So they ſhall make their own Tongue to fall upon themſelves, all that ſee them ſhall flee away*, Pſal. 64. 8. for it would be a ſtrange and marvellous thing, that if People were fully ſenſible that ſuch an inviſible Enemy (who acts by viſible Inſtruments) would deprive and hinder them of ſo much good, and deceive into Evil and Miſery, and yet they ſhould give way unto him. Is there an Inſtance of this to be found in common Life? That Men ſhould hate their Friends and love

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their Enemies; eſpecially when the laſt appear barefaced as ſuch. Indeed when there is Diſguiſe, Flattery, and concealing, it may be after that Manner, but it cannot ſo be when they openly deſign nothing but Death and Deſtruction, and to defeat them of ſuch an exceeding Good and Reward. And yet ſuch are all the Methods of Satan, of whatever Nature and Kind they be; whether direct Oppoſition or keeping back, whether it be by way of Excuſe or Imagination, as indeed all Excuſes might at firſt be ſuſpected by Chriſtian Knowledge and diſcerning; becauſe we are forewarned in the Word of God, that they keep off from coming unto him, and into the Way of his Commandments. *Thoſe invited to the great Supper, did all, with one Conſent, begin to make Excuſe*, Luke 14. 18. Now it is plain and obvious, and underſtood by any one that where People ſhift, and would excuſe themſelves, there is an Unwillingneſs. But the Phraſe of the obedient Servant is, *I will run the Way of thy Commandments*, Pſal. 114. 32. which denotes Readineſs and Speed in the ſame.

The ſeveral Actions and Paſſages of our Life do either lead towards Heaven, they are a ſtanding ſtill, or a going backwards. They either increaſe our Reward, or they do nothing towards it, or they render us liable to Puniſhment. Now the ſtanding ſtill and doing nothing, ſinks down to the place of unprofitable Servants; for it is contrary to the Will of

of our Master, who would have us to be trading to his use. He seems to be gone afar off, that he may require an Account, though even now he standeth at the door, and is near to every one of us. He hath withdrawn himself out of our sight, and yet he beholds what we do, though we do not so much regard him; because we see him not. In all things pertaining to God it is left to us whether we will freely and willingly do the same, or leave them undone.

The Law given us was ordered to be written in a Book; and now it may be seen whether Men will take notice, and do thereafter. As for that Law engraven in the Heart, it may be either stifled through Sloth or Negligence, or it may be cherished and furthered by giving heed thereunto, and acting accordingly, and seeking further into it. God might have put into Man as strong an inclination to Read in his Book, as he hath a Natural Desire to behold the Light of the Sun, and the same constant steadiness to observe the Words of his Law, as to Eat, Drink, and Sleep, and observe the common Rules and Measures of Life. He might have given such a lively Sense of his Promises and Threatnings, as any King now doth of his Rewards and Punishments; so that all People should have been equally, yea infinitely more concerned to have the one and eschew the other. He might have so inculcated and enforced his Commands, that they should be

be had in continual remembrance; and there ſhould have been the like conſtant Care and Caution to keep them, as to preſerve our ſelves in Health, and as we avoid bodily Hurt or Sickneſs. The like watchfulneſs might have been in all, as is now in ſome peculiar People. Even the Multitude and Generality might be led with the ſame bent and inclination, to live always according to his Statutes, as now they have to follow their own ways. *His Laws are ſet before us by his Servants the Prophets*, Dan. 9. 10. And in the phraſe of another, who ſpake by the ſame Divine Spirit, *Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear*, Ezek. 2. 5. which denotes liberty and freedom of Obedience or Refuſal. As God did formerly ſuffer all Nations to walk in their own ways, ſo now having made known his Mind and Will, they are further proved whether they will receive the knowledge of it, and do thereafter. He hath diſcovered himſelf ſo far to the World by what is already revealed and made known, that they ſhould ſeek after him yet further. His Truth is thus far manifeſt to the generality of Mankind, that they alſo ſhould learn and enquire after it. *That the reſidue of Men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my Name is called, ſaith the Lord, who doth all theſe things*, Acts 15. 17. Still there muſt be ſome act and endeavour in Man. There muſt be both a willingneſs and compliance in him to accept of what God hath done for him. A-

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greeable hereunto is the whole Divine Revelation, and that form of Speech our Saviour makes use of in reference to himself and his Disciples, *He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me*, Mat. 10. 40. *And he that despiseth you, despiseth me*, Luke 10. 10. The one is a willing Act, and the other a wilful Refusal. So his Servant *John* speaketh unto the World, *He which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is Righteous, let him be Righteous still*, Rev. 22. 11. Not that it is the Mind of God that any one should continue in his wickedness; for he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn and live. But after former Calls there comes this kind of Speech, That such an one may choose; he may do what he will, for God seems to cast him off; and this makes People the more willing to come, as we have an Example hereof in *Judges* 10. 13, 14, 15. As on the other hand when things are proffered and seem to be made easie, they contemn it, and do keep off.

The whole History of the Church ever since the World began, and also the Method of his Spiritual Dispensation doth plainly shew that all Men are left to their free Liberty and Choice whether they will serve God or not: *And if it seem Evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the Gods which your Fathers served: but as for me and my House, we will serve the Lord*, Joshua

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24.15. *If thou doſt well, ſhalt not thou be accepted? and if thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door,* Gen. 4.7.

Truly God is the great King over all the Earth, and he hath Right to Rule over all its Inhabitants. He is the Lord and Governour of the World; and it is meet that he ſhould exerciſe Authority, and receive Homage from all things which he hath made: How much more from ſuch a ſmall ſpot, and little part of his Creation, as the Earth is? Every one who doth in the leaſt conſider, muſt acknowledge God's Dominion moſt juſt and due in the general; for our ſelves aſſent unto that Honour and Obedience which are given to thoſe ſeveral Relations of King, Father and Maſter: Whereas thoſe according to the fleſh, and our own Fellow-Creatures, are not ſo much in compariſon of the high and lofty One, as a ſingle duſt of the Ballance is to the whole Fabrick of the World; or as a drop of a Bucket to the Sea, or as a ſingle Graſhopper is to all the Creatures that have Life and Breath: So there ſhould not be the leaſt grudging at his Superiority and Reigning over us. And as our ſelves like to have things done readily and chearfully, ſo likewiſe it is reaſonable that God ſhould expect the ſame of us. *Thy People ſhall be willing in the day of thy Power,* Pſal. 110. 3. God is the ſame from all Eternity, and hath at all times the very ſame Power; for he can do all things, and whatſoever he pleaſes. But

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as it is said in another place, *Many a time turned he his Anger away, and did not stir up all his Wrath*, Psal. 78. 38. So likewise he hath not yet in this Earth, nor doth now exert all his Power and Might. Indeed sometimes he doth make a little more then ordinary manifestation thereof, as in those Signs and Wonders which he wrought of Old Time; and then we hear what effect they had; for they did cause an impression upon the Minds of People; and they were for the time Reverent, Submissive, and Obedient towards God. He might have continued the like tokens among them, and have given them a succession of more, which also should have spoken as sensibly unto them as out of the Cloudy Pillar, *That it was because they kept not his Laws which he gave them.* These things were done once or twice in the several Generations that passed through here; not to every Generation, but to those in former time, that they might tell their Children to come, to see if they would be perswaded to keep his Statutes, and observe his Laws by what they heard God visibly did amongst their Forefathers. Those Miracles were soon over, and did not remain long among them; To prove whether the Remembrance would have the like effect, as when they were present and before the Faces of People. Who were over-aw'd by the sight of such dreadful Things, might still call to mind the same, and perform a free and ready Service. And so as they did look

back, and had heard of the things done heretofore; so we now living may likewise reflect on the same. And we who now stand in these latter days on the Earth, may look forward to what may be in our time, and in the Generations following.

When God shall yet in a more extraordinary manner than since the beginning of the World, or Man was Created on the Earth, Bow the Heavens and come down, declare his Power and Presence in a much more visible and eminent manner than ever of old time; when the Lord God shall dwell amongst us, and Reign before his Ancients Gloriously.

Who would not fear and obey thee, O King of Nations! forasmuch as thou containest all the good and excellency which is any where to be found amongst the best and wisest of the Sons of Men. For thou first gavest unto them what is now loved and honoured in them. And therefore more Reverence, and Love, and Thanksgiving, and good Will belong unto thee, of whom are all things. Thou didst therefore communicate a light and imperfect measure of Good unto the best of Men; lest they should draw off from looking on thee, who art All in all.

When God himself shall come and appear, even the Rebellious also shall submit unto him; for they shall be over-awed with his Majesty and Greatness; and they shall be likewise perswaded thereunto by his Goodness and Truth.

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The desire of all Nations shall come, and he shall so clearly manifest himself to be indeed what he hath revealed himself, Loving unto every Man; He doth good, and filleth our Souls with Food and Gladness: when this is throughly known, then all former Prejudices and Aversation against him shall vanish, and be utterly done away. In that day shall this Song be Sung by his Elect and peculiar People, *This is the Lord whom we have waited for*; and others shall be astonished and confounded within themselves, how it came to pass that they should either despise or conceive evil Thoughts against him. They shall bite their Tongues for Indignation, which did utter hard Speeches against his Majesty. *The Lord and his Saints shall convince them of their ungodly deeds*, Jude 15. and they shall be so vexed within themselves, that they would even of their own accord cut off both their Hands and their Feet which did offend, and were instrumental to commit Iniquity, and cast them into the fire. *Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*, Psal. 73. 1. He shall more plainly demonstrate himself to be thus, than that the Sun doth now give Light to the lower World, or that he gives Rain which wets and moistens the Earth. He shall sensibly manifest himself to be agreeable unto our Nature. He is suitable unto, and shall most fully satisfie every Desire in the Soul of Man. Stretch out your Understanding every way conceive to the utmost,

utmoſt, more than is poſſible to utter; whatever you want or would have, our God ſhall be yet more unto us.

This was ſomewhat diſcerned before by thoſe who were of a *pure Heart*. They had a little Taſte and foreconception of his Goodneſs. The more they did ſearch into it, the more they did find and were ſatisfied therein. But the Generality of Mankind were willingly ignorant of this. They did not like to receive God into their Knowledge, nor ſeek after and underſtand his Nature and Properties. Thence came to be in them an evil Heart of Forgetfulneſs and Averſation towards him, for they could not be unmindful, nor yet have any Eſtrangedneſs, had they known him. How is it poſſible to forget him who created all things, and is all in all, who filleth Heaven and Earth with his Preſence? How can any one refuſe the deſiring of him who is the chief and only Good: From whom is derived all that is really profitable and truly ſweet unto us? Who even now is kind, and poureth down his Benefits upon us, but hath reſerved for us greater and more enduring things. The things preſent do juſtly require our Praiſe and Acknowledgment; but the things to come do call for our Obedience and Duty. We ſhould even now ſpeak out of what we have, and do ſomething for God, in Expectation of what we ſhall be Partakers. That we ſhould ſhew forth the utmoſt Good-will towards him now we are in

the Way, and he hath put us in a Capacity to do it. We may by Faith apprehend, and fully rest in what he promises, so it is our Wisdom, and will be our Advantage to give all Readiness to perform what he doth require of us. *Wherefore Beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him without Spot and blameless*, 2 Pet. 3. 14. Such Wages and Reward are sufficient to put upon doing every Tittle of our Duty, to cleanse our selves that we may be meet Partakers, and when we have done all, we come short; for our Services are in no wise proportionable to the expected Recompence. Not the Thousandth Part thereof could have been thought of and expected, unless God had been pleased to make known and promise it; and still we are to wait what he of his own good Pleasure will do for his Creatures.

There are many Considerations, which also should make us *willing* in the Day of his Grace and Forbearance, as we shall certainly be in the *Day of his Power*. If we would now understand what we shall then be sensible of, we should even at this present Time do after the required Manner, for the very same Reasons, as we shall then wish we had done it. What prevails upon his own peculiar People to do such and such things, would do the same as to others, for they also are Men of the same Passions and Inclinations, but these were governed and rectified by the Knowledge and Grace of our Lord

Lord Jesus Christ. Even we should move and press earnestly to the Mark of the high Calling, if we would further receive and attend unto what would quicken us from within. *Paul* did labour more abundantly than the other Apostles, because of the greater Degree of Grace which was in him. Grace is an active Principle, and stirs up to be continually doing the Will of God. Yea, there is the like Inclination towards the same in the Soul, as the Body hath after Meat and Drink. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled*, Mat. 5. 6. When there is the same earnest Appetite after all the things of God, expressed by that one Word of *Righteousness*, as others have after the Increase and full Enjoyment of their Corn and Wine, here is an assured Promise of obtaining and of full Satisfaction.

Now an earnest Desire (unless it be suppressed by Sloth or Negligence) puts upon Action, and using the Means to obtain; for in Desire there is Torment, and we must do something to be freed from that, or else seek to quiet and stupifie it. Again, This same Desire commonly points out and shews some future and distant Good, which may be had upon such things to be done before; and also there is a Want in the Soul of the same thing, which is suitable unto her Nature. We were therefore put in an imperfect Condition, that we might ascend up and labour after what is further set before

us. There is ſuch a Senſe and Conſciouſneſs of this in Mankind, that they do actually endeavour to embetter their preſent Condition where there is any Probability and Likelihood, and where they do not, it is through wretched Sloth or dull Ignorance. In this the rational Creatures differ from brute Beaſts; for theſe only live to eat and labour: They juſt breath and are not ſenſible of more. Whereas Man acts after, and can conceive things more excellent. Now if there be the like Aſſurance and Certainty to obtain them as the things before us, then it is a reaſonable Inference, That there ſhould be a like and greater Endeavour, becauſe of their infinitely more Worth and longer Continuance. The greateſt worldly Good doth not ſatisfie when had, and of this we muſt be certainly deprived in a ſhort Time; whereas the heavenly good things are proportionable to our utmoſt Deſires, and ſhall for ever remain. So that, was there but a doubtful Expectation of ſuch great and enduring things (a Probability that they were, and a Poſſibility that they were not) yet one might give up, and leave theſe preſent things upon the alone Venture (if we may ſo ſpeak) of thoſe things to come. Whatever doth now pertain to us, and is had by us, doth utterly periſh and come to nothing. They are all along paſſing by, and at length Man dies and is taken away from them. So the things of this World are no Foundation, for it ſlides away,

away, and alſo our ſelves are decaying. Now if there was no more, how come in thoſe Deſires after continuing and durable things? When we ſee every thing paſſeth away, wherefore do we even now covet after what remains? When our ſelves are continually dying, why do we thirſt after Immortality? And ſince we do, Day by Day, haſte to that State where we ſeem to ceaſe to be, what means that earneſt Inclination to have a Being for ever? There is a ſtrong Perſwaſion and aſſured Confidence that we ſhall not die, or rather, *Thy dead Men ſhall live, together with my dead Body ſhall they ariſe*, Iſa. 26. 19. But we ſhall only be removed into another Place, or ſtand here again in theſe later Days upon the Earth, when both our ſelves and this Place alſo ſhall be changed into a more glorious and abiding Condition. That very Knowledge and Deſire implanted into our Nature, of more than is perceived or can be had here, doth moſt clearly demonſtrate that there are real things to which it doth relate. It being ſo firmly riveted and grafted in, doth plainly ſhew that it came from the Author of our Nature: Even he who made us, hath ſo ordained us; who created the Fleſh, did alſo form the Spirit. And as that is eſtabliſhed to have a Senſe of things ſenſible, ſo this hath a Knowledge and Conception of things ſpiritual. As that taſtes and ſees the things preſent, ſo the Soul doth as evidently perceive and apprehend things to come. And this would

equally appear in all People, if they did in like manner put forth the Powers of their Soul towards divine and heavenly things, as the Instruments and Members of Body are employed about the things of the Earth. *Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord*, Hos. 6. 3. First know somewhat of his infinite and glorious Godhead, and then how he hath created and established things. Also in our selves is implanted a Power and Capacity to arrive at the Knowledge of them.

It is superfluous to bring many Arguments to prove the things which are true and real already; but yet because they are concealed and hidden, by searching they may be found out: when the Evidence of things not seen is brought forth, it makes as if they were seen. So we find in ordinary Cases, that in a matter of Fact done heretofore, or in a distant Place, it is as nothing to us; but when it is declared and told unto us by certain faithful Witnesses, it is in a manner present, and as if we saw it with our Eyes. Thus it is of historical Matters and common things done in the World: So it is likewise of God's wonderful Acts done in former Generations, the Miracles and Signs wrought by Christ and his Apostles which are conveyed down unto us after the same manner, as publick Records, which are either written, or one Generation tells to another. Now the first is the more certain Way, because that remains when the Voice and Sound of the Mouth perishes in the Utterance, and many times is forgot-

forgotten. There is the expreſs Order of Almighty God, *Iſa.* 30. 8. that theſe things be *written.* Hence his Word is called Scripture, that is, a Writing, and is ſo *noted in a Book, that it may be for the Time to come for ever and ever.*

In which is a Declaration of God's Will unto Men, what he doth require of them, with a Rehearſal and Promiſes of what he hath already, and will yet do for them. Our ſelves know what we intend to do ſuch a Time hereafter, if we have Life, Power, the ſame Mind and Circumſtances continue alike. Now he is the Everliving Almighty God, with whom is no Shadow of turning; who ſits above, and hath the Diſpoſal of all Times and Seaſons; who governs and hath Power over all things; who knows all the Hearts of all the Sons of Men, the utmoſt which is or can be: Before whom all things, paſt, preſent, and to come, are the ſame. So what he hath ſaid, ſhall moſt certainly be. *For the Lord of Hoſts hath purpoſed, and who ſhall diſannul it,* Iſa. 14. 27. *I will work, and who ſhall let it?* Iſa. 43. 13. However, for a while Satan and his Inſtruments are ſuffered to reſiſt and to try what they can to hinder, yet the Work of God cannot be utterly overthrown; for notwithſtanding all the Malice and Oppoſition of Men or Devils, it will come to paſs at the laſt. Hath he ſaid, and ſhall it not come to paſs? Yes aſſuredly; *For that that is determined ſhall be done,* Dan. 11. 36. *For the Viſion is yet, for an appointed Time, but at the End it ſhall ſpeak, and not lie: Though it*

tarry, wait for it; becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry, Hab. 2.3. But in the mean while we are apt to ſtagger and diſtruſt, becauſe we do not ſee it fulfilled in our Generations. Whereas we are but of a ſhort Time, and to him a Thouſand Years are but as one Day, and he will have a ſuitable Space for fulfilling his great and glorious Work. For even the leſſer things are done gradually and in Succeſſion of Time. In this little Space and ſhort Time, we do not find all things to be ſo as we are told of; yet nevertheleſs we are here ſo much aſcertained of the leſs, as to build up a ſure Truſt and Confidence for the greater. And we ſhall be tranſlated up thither, where it ſhall be ſaid, *As we have heard, ſo have we ſeen*, Pſal. 48. 8. when Faith ſhall be turned into Viſion; the Subſtance of things not ſeen ſhall be the Remembrance how our God did promiſe and keep them out of Sight. But now he doth perform the ſame, and they are revealed with open Face. Therefore were they ordered to be future and unſeen, to prove whether we would give Credence unto his Word: If we would be diligent in the Work of the Lord, expecting a Reward from him in his due Time. But if his great and good things were now preſent before us, and to be had as thoſe things of this World now are, what ſnatching and running would there be after them? People would never think themſelves too diligent and earneſt. They would make haſte and not delay the Time

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to keep God's Commandments. Had they a through and firm Perſwaſion of what he ſaith, *Every Man ſhall receive his own Reward according to his own Labour*, 1 Cor. 3. 8. Each Perſon would then try who ſhall moſt abound in the Work of the Lord. They would lay hold of every Opportunity for well-doing, if they might partake of his Acceptation and Recompence. They would call to mind what they had been heretofore a doing. To what End or to what Good were all the paſt Actions they had taken under the Sun? What am I at preſent better for having had or done this? And is there Expectation of any thing more? Will my heretofore ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures make me happy now? Wherefore then do they not ſatisfie at this Moment? Why do they utterly vaniſh and diſappear? How comes it to paſs that Day by Day they ceaſe to delight, and are leſs recreating? Surely, I have been miſtaken all along. It is Happineſs and Satisfaction which I deſire, and they make a falſe Shew thereof. It is Peace and Reſt which I would endeavour at, and they leave behind Craving and Trouble.

The ſinful Profits of this World ſeem to be ſomewhat more enduring and real. But let us reflect upon them either Way, as, Soul, eat, drink and be merry. We will get ſo much and then enjoy our ſelves according as the Phraſe of the World is; or to pleaſe our ſelves with keeping an Abundance as the covetous Mammoniſt

moniſt doth. Yet ſtill this is a meer conceit and a Reaſonable Creature cannot be filled or ſatisfied with that, and here *Pſal.* 49. 17, 18. lies expreſs againſt him, *For when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away, his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him. Though whilſt he lived, he bleſſed his Soul.* All the Service and Labour after Mammon is evidently determined within this ſhort Time; and it ſtands in no ſtead at all further. Now an Account ſhall be demanded what we have done here? What Proviſion was made againſt the Time to come? What Foundation was laid in by good Works? Wherefore was all their Labour about periſhing and temporal things? And not about the eternal which do remain? Every one is to give account for his Talent and how he improved it to the Glory of his Maſter; that he may receive Authority and Commendation proportionable. It ſhall be recompenſed to every one according to what he hath done. Where was more done, there ſhall be a greater Reward: ſo that all the Actions of a Man tend as much to himſelf in that State, as what is done in the preſent Time. The unprofitable Servant is to be bound Hand and Foot, and to be caſt into outer Darkneſs. Every one is called to work in the Vineyard; and if any one doth not come as ſoon as he is called (as thoſe did in the Parable, *Mat.* 20.) himſelf muſt anſwer before Almighty God for the Refuſal to obey his Commands. And alſo People do not attend nor rightly conſider how

how they willingly deprive themſelves of ſo much Wages and Recompenſe. Seeing that God hath revealed himſelf to be ſo bountiful and good a Maſter, Servants ſhould ſhew themſelves accordingly unto him; and as it were, meet him in the Way of Righteouſneſs. They are to ſtrive who ſhould run faſteſt; who ſhall perform their Work with a more willing and chearful Mind; and to offer themſelves who ſhall make the firſt Aſſault, or do ſuch an Act of Duty; for even thus much is done for our Maſters according to the Fleſh. Is not God more gracious and better than they? Are not his Benefits as valuable? Ought not his Favour and Good-will to be more eſteemed?

But his good things are to come; why, whatſoever we now have and enjoy, did firſt proceed from God and is his own. Man hath the Uſe of ſome things, but God hath the Propriety of all. But the greater things alſo will be actually preſent as thoſe things now before us are; and then theſe preſent things ſhall be utterly done away. So they are upon equal, yea more Advantage than what is now before our Eyes. Tribulation, Anguiſh and ſelf-Indignation will be upon every Soul that did neglect them for periſhing Bubbles and empty Nothings: Which then they find, as before they might have learned, to come to nothing at all; for they were juſt had and paſſed by. And yet by the Nature of them, by the utmoſt Certainty and Reality of future and inviſible things they

they might have been perſwaded to ſeek diligently after them.

For the ſame Word of Truth, which ſpake of the one, hath told us of the other alſo. *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made*, Pſal. 33. 6. *And upholding all things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. 1. 3. which hath created and given to each thing its Nature; and now connects and holds things faſt together as they are. The ſame Word ſaith, *For behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth*, Iſa. 65. 17. ſo that as certainly as things now are, and ſtand after this manner as they do at preſent, they will be likewiſe ſo fulfilled as we are foretold of. Thoſe gracious Promiſes in *Iſa.* 45. 17, 18, 19. are confirmed with the like Reaſon, which is as it were inſerted between them, *viz. But* Iſrael *ſhall be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting Salvation: Ye ſhall not be aſhamed, nor confounded World without End. For thus ſaith the Lord that created the Heavens; God himſelf that formed the Earth and made it; he hath eſtabliſhed it, he created it not in vain: he formed it to be inhabited, I am the Lord and there is none elſe. I have not ſpoken in ſecret, in a dark Place of the Earth: I ſaid not unto the Seed of* Jacob, *ſeek ye me in vain: I the Lord ſpeak Righteouſneſs, I declare things that are right.* Here is an Anſwer and full Satisfaction given to that common Queſtion and Thought, what do People get by the Service of God? They expoſe themſelves to prevent Self-denial and Labour, but what

what Recompence and Gain? For if others are diligent after worldly things, they do commonly obtain. But here we are assured of that which cannot be had in this World, *To be saved with an everlasting Salvation.* There is no present Return to exercise our Faith and Waiting. So that now we become liable to Shame and Disappointment by labouring for nothing: Yet what saith the Witness of God? *Ye shall not be ashamed World without End.* At long run it shall not be thus. At the End of Time it shall be otherwise; and this is ratified by what we now see, even his lesser Works are done for some Purpose, as in the Instance here assigned, the Earth was created to be inhabited. But here again Faith is exercised; for some things seem to be created in vain, and a Part of the Earth is not inhabited, as barren Mountains and the waste howling Wilderness; yet there are also Creatures of some Sorts, and God may have great Intents and Purposes herein, which we know not as yet, but shall know. He asserts himself by his Name, the Lord, to be ALMIGHTY, the chief and only Ruler, and none can controul him; so that he will perform what he hath said. If one thinks within himself to do thus, or makes private Promises, there he may alter his Mind or Falsify and meet with no Discredit, but only from the Person to whom it was entrusted. But God declares out of the Thoughts of his Heart, and speaks out publickly to all the World, that neither the Seed of

Jacob,

Jacob, nor any one who doth the Works of *Abraham*, or comes within the Covenant made to the Patriarchs, shall *seek him in vain*. Again, He confirms it further by his righteous Nature, and declaring the things that are right. So we may be bold to say, that where in serving him we submit our selves to present Loss or Labour, there God is pleased to speak in Righteousness; and thence we may assuredly gather, that he will render a Reward accordingly. But as he is gracious and bountiful, it will as much exceed our Works, as if one should give a Thousand Pounds to a Labourer, when he deserves no more than a Penny. *God is not unrighteous to forget your Work and Labour of Love*, Heb. 6. 10. He will take notice of every thing that is done purely for him. *Thou tellest my Wandrings, put thou my Tears into thy Bottle: Are they not in thy Book*, Psal. 56. 8. As he doth take Knowledge of every least Sin and Error; so likewise will he make up abundantly to us for all the Sorrow and Hardship we have sustained for him. *A Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and thought on his Name*, Mal. 3. 16. in which is recorded all the Reproaches they endured from the wicked, and also every right Work they have done with all the particular Circumstances thereof. The Apostle advises, *Look to your selves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full Reward*, 2 John 8. So the like Admonition may be given

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to those who are as yet unconverted and in a State of Sin, that they defer not one Moment longer to turn unto the Lord their God. For besides the Danger of being cut off in their Sins, and the Doubtfulness of gaining God's Favour and Acceptation; but if they should obtain, yet they deprive themselves of a greater Reward. Though the long and habituated Sinner may be saved, that is, only when he turns from all the Sins which he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right; yet it will be as by Fire, that is with Difficulty: However, he shall *suffer Loss*: That is, it would be better for him throughout all Eternity, if he had never continued in such a Course of Sin. *What Fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* Rom. 6. 21. There is no Benefit and Advantage in them. So likewise Time slides away, such Opportunities are irrevocably lost which might be improved to a blessed Eternity. So much might be done in the mean while towards building up a Mansion in the Heavens. The Foundation may in due time be laid, and upon this he may *build Gold, Silver, precious Stones, Wood, Hay, Stubble*: He may wisely contrive and do the best Works. *Every Man's Work shall be made manifest, for the Day shall declare it*, 1 Cor. 3. 13. The Light shall shew of what Kind it is, and how it hath been wrought all along, even when it was in Beginning, and so till the Finishing thereof. It shall be strictly examined and surveyed,

veyed, as Gold in the Fire, which purges away the Droſs, when the pure Metal remains, and appears more excellent. *If any Man's Work abide which he hath built thereupon, he ſhall receive a Reward*, 1 Cor. 3. 14. If he hath been employed about enduring things, here is another Promiſe and Confirmation hereof.

What Need of ſuch abundant Mention and giving ſo full Aſſurance concerning a Reward? Why have we not a good God, who giveth us now all things richly to enjoy? May we not do ſomething for him by way of Gratitude and Thankfulneſs for former Mercies, without Expectation of any thing more? Where is our Love and Ingenuity that we cannot act by the Principles of an excellent Nature, but muſt be led on by Mercenarineſs? Our Want and imperfection call for ſomething more than we have already. But then we ſhould deſire ſomewhat which is worthy. It is Narrowneſs of Spirit and Ignorance of Mind to run ſo greedily after worldly and preſent Recompence, or to imagine more therein than really is. It is baſe Selfiſhneſs to do nothing but for the Sake of Profit in Caſe we are ſomewhat ſufficient before. But ſeeing that moſt have not and they muſt live by Labour; and the Bleſſing and the Promiſe is, *For thou ſhalt eat the Labour of thine Hands, happy ſhalt thou be and it ſhall be well with thee*, Pſal. 128. 2. there it may be honeſtly ſought after and had. In every thing there is Trial (*What is Man that thou ſhouldſt try him eve-*

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ry Moment!) And nevertheless it is further so ordained that the Servant of God may approve himself therein, and yet not be in Necessity of falling. There are the Wages of Iniquity and Unrighteousness, the Gifts of Satan, which are offered and had upon unlawful Means if they will decline from the Law of the most High, consent unto some Evil, and so fall down and worship the Author thereof: Whereas if they would keep their Integrity, continue whole and stedfast in his Covenant, God hath annexed further unto that a precious Promise and exceeding Reward.

Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompenced to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, Rom. 11. 35, 36. He hath first furnished us with Means, and enabled with Power to perform whatever we do. He hath given Knowledge, Strength, Inclination and Impulse. It is done by his assisting and working Grace, and at his Command and Requiring. If I may use such a plain and common Phrase, least it should be said, God is any thing beholden to his Creatures he doth give them such an overabundunt Requital, even before we had done what was our Duty to do. And what he is pleased to add further, is infinitely beyond our deserving, neither could we have any Expectation thereof unless himself had foretold us. By Faith, Boasting is excluded, for Faith is the Gift of God, and also it apprehends things unutterable and so

exceeding great that it is no more Vertue and Excellency to receive them, than stooping down to the Ground to take up a Diamond, or going half a Mile for a Bag of Gold and to have it for our Pains. The Prize set before us doth yet exceed our utmost Endeavour after it. So that the having an Eye unto the Recompence of Reward, doth quite stop our Mouth and take away all manner of Boasting. For it is evident, when such exceeding great and precious Promises will scarce move us to Obedience; and where they do, yet not to perform it continually; much less should we have done such as is commanded if we had no Promises at all. Even in those things which we think we need not do, as in Free-will Offerings and what we would do of our own Accord, There is a secret Hope and Expectation that God would take notice thereof: And a Thought doth arise, at least a Doubt and Staggering, whether if we were assured that he would not requite it but yet accept and be well-pleased with it, then the Tryal would be whether we would still do the same only out of Love and Thankfulness, admitting it would further expose us to present Inconveniences and Trouble. Our Natnre is either averse or sluggish that we have need of something to conquer and stir us up; first to bring us in, and then to quicken us in the right way. To move us to begin, and then to keep us continually in doing. *Now to him that worketh is the Reward*

reckoned

reckoned not of Grace but of Debt, Rom. 4. 4. So it is of one Man from another as may be gathered from Verſ. 2. *For if* Abraham *be juſtified by Works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.* If one labours for another he is not beholden to him for Wages, for the Work is as profitable and beneficial to the one as Payment is to the other: But the Caſe is otherſtiſe between God and us; for firſt he hath wrought all our Works in us, he brought us into Being, and hath fed us up hitherto: And one Way or another he hath prevented, aſſiſted and directed in thoſe things which more immediately relate unto him, though we are heedleſs as not to diſcern it, no more than we perceive how we live and move in him, which yet we do all along, that to him belongs all the Glory and Praiſe thereof. The utmoſt in Man is his Liberty of acting and working together with the Grace of God; but ſtill he firſt implanted that Power and Ability; and when it turns towards Good, it was God and his Grace that weighed down the Scale, and over-ruled it unto the right and true Way.

Alaſs! We are ſuch ſmall and finite Creatures, that the utmoſt we do is very little and next to nothing: For if the beſt Performances of the greateſt and moſt diligent Saints on Earth be conſidered, what is their Righteouſneſs unto him? Or what receives he of their Hands? Even they come ſhort of what they might have done yet more, for they might

have further improved their Talent. *Therefore I ſay unto you, the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof,* Mat. 21.43. But ſince the preaching and Promulgation of the Goſpel to the World no Nation hath yet brought forth ſuch Fruits (God knows what will be done in the latter Days) as might be juſtly expected from it. Nothing hath been done anſwerable to the precious Truths contained therein. It was the Lord who gave the Word, who planted the Trees, but the Ground hath not brought forth ſuitable Increaſe thereof. The Husbandmen have not manured and dreſſed it as they ſhould have done. And what Fruits have been, or ſhall at length ſpring up from it, Lord, thou haſt but what is thine own: They are but living Inſtruments, all one as the Spade or Pruning Hook in the Hands of the Gardiner; and at laſt the Work ſuffers Loſs and Diſadvantoge by Reaſon of thoſe employed therein. If they do any thing rightly, it is of God that they do ſo, but the Weakneſs and Fault is of themſelves only: God worketh in us both to will and to do: He hath ſhewed us how; ſo that all things and all our Works are to be attributed to him only: He ſits above and Chriſt at his Right Hand, expecting what his Servants will do for him; in like manner as till his Enemies are made his Footſtool: Both which are conſequent one to the other; for by means of his Servants he will overcome the rebellious and make them ſubmit under him. *The*

The Lord looketh down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek God, Pſal. 14. 1. That did rightly apprehend the End of their Being in this World and did look after their Maker, that by the things known already did aſcend yet further. That by what is known of God, did ſeek out yet more, if they could find out further Trace and Footſteps of this inviſible Being. As his Way is in the Waters, he rideth upon the Wings of the Wind and the Clouds are the Duſt of his Feet, ſo we may ſee God in every thing. To behold him, not only in the Sanctuary, but in every Part of his Temple, which is Heaven and Earth, and in each Part and Corner thereof. To behold him in his viſible Works, and to perceive him in his inviſible things. To underſtand that great Relation of the Creator and his Creatures: But more eſpecially how we are concerned with that God with whom we have all to do. What he doth require of us, and what we are to render unto him. The Phraſe of looking down to ſee doth plainly denote that they are left to their Freedom and Liberty. The ſame is likewiſe ſignified in the Parable of the Vineyard, *Iſa.* 5. and *Mark* 12. 1, 2. where God hath done all things that were neceſſary and reaſonable, and looks what will come of it: Whether thoſe Powers of acting he hath endued the Sons of Men withal will be employed in the right way, or in extravagant things, or be folded up in Idleneſs and Sloth.

Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit he taketh away, and every Branch that beareth Fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more Fruit, John 15. 2. To all is committed at firſt ſome Grace and Power in order to ſpiritual things; but who do not uſe it accordingly, it is withdrawn from them. But to them who manage aright is committed yet more that they ſhould labour according to the Strength given them. For whatever is in us is to be uſed and put forth. Knowledge is to be communicated, and ſtill further Degrees and Increaſe thereof is to be ſought after in order to impart that forth again. Truth is to be declared and ſpoken out, and this alſo is to be ſought after and received for the aforeſaid End and Purpoſe. As the Bloſſom is to the Fruit, ſo is Knowledge to Obedience and good Works. The firſt is the Principle, it goes before and gives Hope of the Fruit which is better; and accordingly will end in that unleſs it be blaſted and withered. So this is the Beginning of our Duty; for we cannot do any thing in order to God unleſs we know ſomewhat of him. We cannot keep his Law till we apprehend what it is: As there is an Unwillingneſs, Averſation, Forgetfulneſs of God and good things; ſo there ſhould be ſomething to overcome that, to ſtir up our Remembrance, to keep this always in the Imagination of our Heart. *O Lord God of* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob *and of* Iſrael *our Fathers, keep this for ever in the Imagination of the Thoughts of*

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the Heart of thy People, and prepare their Heart unto thee, 1 Chron. 29. 18. Nevertheleſs it is too often ſeen through the marvellous Subtilty of Satan (who doth every way endeavour to beguile and to beat off) that many have good and right Knowledge, but it remains as it were blaſted, for it lies dead within and doth not ſhoot forth into well-doing. Many times it drops off and Periſhes, having no Root or Stalk in them; for taking no Delight, and apprehending no Good therein, they ſuffer it to paſs through their Underſtanding as Water running through a Pipe; which may wet and moiſten a little for the Time, but returns to its former Drineſs. They may be a little affected for the Time, but afterwards they do not mind nor give heed thereafter. It makes a goodly Shew and Appearance without, but it is meer Leaf and Colour, and nothing worth unleſs it grows towards Fruit and Perfection.

God is not to be ſerved by halves. As he requires the whole Man, ſo he would have his Work finiſhed and compleat, or elſe a tending towards it, if it be ſuch as he will accept of. *Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works,* Jam. 2. 18. Faith may be without Works, but Works is a good Sign of Faith. If they be right ſpiritual and Divine Works, they muſt have Faith and Knowledge for Beginning and Performance of the ſame; for wouldſt thou know, wherefore they are done by ſome and not by others? Be-

cause some understand the Obligation they are under, and the Encouragement they have to the same. All People would alike do the Will of God if they have the like Thoughts and Apprehensions concerning the same. There is one Faith and one Hope, so they might equally believe and have the same Assurance of good things to come, if they would study and seek diligently after them. If they would suffer themselves to know their Duty and be in a Readiness to perform the same, God would reveal it unto them: Provided they do receive the Knowledge thereof, and not put it off and stifle it: He would incline them to do the same, if they would yield unto and not resist his Motions. He would give his Spirit if they would not grieve nor quench it; and if they would preserve their Body in Holiness and Sobriety, fit for its Habitation, he would enlighten and rectifie their Understandings, if they would draw off the thick Coverings of Ignorance and Disobedience; which make that either the Mind cannot apprehend at all, or it is full of Falshood and Delusions: For the Transgressors having not observed but departed from the Law of the most High, to save and defend themselves, they seek out for Excuses and Imaginations; and through the Perplexity and Maze of them, the Sinner doth not so easily apprehend what is good and true. *A deceived Heart hath turned him aside*, Isa. 44. 20. So it is always, when one starts or goes out of the good Way: And likewise the same hinders

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from coming in; as, a ſecret Imagination that it is ſoon enough, or, pray have me excuſed for this and the like Reaſon. There is an hundred Kind of Surmiſes or Imaginations.

But in Alluſion to what our Saviour ſaith, take heed how ye hear, ſo let People take heed how they think, for God diſcerns their innermoſt Thoughts, as plainly as if they were wrote upon their Face, or ſpoken out aloud in the Market-place. However they keep them cloſe and concealed from his faithful People and Miniſters, leaſt they ſhould find ſomething in the Word of Truth to convince them of their Errors and Miſtake, ſo that they need not to go on therein; yet in the mean while known to God are all of them, and he will one Day ſpread them forth before their Faces in the Sight of Angels and Men; and lay it all open, and detect the whole by his eternal Truth. They are ſo angry and vexed at preſent, as if we could inform God who ſearches all things out and knows the very Secrets of the Heart; or as if we did bring their Sins to Remembrance, when himſelf hath declared that he conſiders all their Ways,: Though he doth now *hold his Tongue*, Hab. 1. 13. yet *our God ſhall come and ſhall not keep Silence*, Pſal. 50. 3. He ſhall rehearſe the Thoughts, Words and Actions of the whole Life. *Theſe things haſt thou done and I kept Silence: Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thy ſelf, but I will reprove thee and ſet them in order before thine Eyes*, Pſal. 50. 21. The Time, Place, Circumſtances and Aggravations

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ons will be all manifested, and as they were Day by Day committed, so they shall be reckoned up. In the Midst of Transgression there was no such notice taken of them because God kept Silence; but it might even then have been known that our God would reprove People for the same; because even then he did sometimes do it a little by his Word and Servants, and by the still Voice of his Spirit within them. And though we know nothing of one another, yet God is pleased to convey into our Mind some secret Intents and close Imaginations, giving us thereby to understand that he knows them all; for he gave us this Knowledge. And if the World is now so enraged when only a few Thoughts of their Heart are revealed, good God, what Fear and Confusion will they be in? What Terror and strange Amazement will possess them when all the Thoughts of all the Sons of Men since they have been created on the Earth, shall be fully manifested. *For there is not a Word in my Tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether*, Psal. 139. 4. *And then all Evil corrupt Communications, Lies, vain Swearing, false Oaths, Blasphemies, hard Speeches against God*, Jude. 15. Reproaches of his People, Slander and Backbitings, with all the Sins of the Tongue, which is a World of Iniquity, shall be summed up: So he, who considereth all their Ways, shall bring up all their ungodly Deeds, wicked and unjust Actions; the first whereof they did endeavour to hide from

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the Saints here on Earth, and the latter even from their common Neighbours. If they had but the Knowledge of God, they would understand all this at the present Time; for even now we live under him whose Eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, and are in every Place beholding the Evil and the Good. He hath given his Word which is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart; for that speaks out concerning them, and declare them unto us. *Neither is any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do,* Heb. 4. 13. Not only divine Revelation, but common Reason teacheth the very same: For as our Lord argued to the Pharisees, *Ye Fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?* Luke 11. 40. so he who fashioned every Part of us, must likewise know all that is therein. He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the Eye, shall he not see? So he, who created the Soul with Powers to know, must also much more know himself, and also every thing which she thinks or doth. The Scripture in sundry Places asserts this all-knowing Property of God. There is no Darkness nor Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themselves: And they which would not commit Wickedness before such a Man, who perhaps hath the faint Image of God within, as to hate and loath Evil; and therefore, if such

such a Spy is in their Presence (as they term him) there is a Secret Awe and Restraint upon their Spirits: But why might not these understand that there is one greater among them who sees and beholds all that they do: Who is holy and hateth all Wickedness: who is the Judge of all Men, and will certainly call them to an Account for what they are now a doing. Yet the Sense of him doth not keep them off from evil-doing: Which happens only from their Ignorance and Forgetfulness of him. For, would not his Holiness and Purity keep them in perfect Order and Subjection, when one who is a less Partaker thereof than a Drop to the whole Ocean doth cast a Damp and clog that they cannot so freely enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, nor run on so uncontroulably in the broad Way which leads unto Destruction. When now they would refrain to do such a thing if a strict Demand and Account should be required of them, would they not much more abstain if they were sensibly assured that the Lord himself shall come with Ten Thousand of his Saints to execute Judgment upon all. He now sitteth in the Heavens and prepareth his Seat for Judgment; and as sure as this is the Time of Trial, so there will be a Day of Examination and rendring unto every one according to his Deeds. Who are now so averse and afraid to hear or speak of him, when we know but little more than of his Name and Truth, which we hear with the Ear, and see it

it thus written of him, and conceive in the Mind. But how will they fly back and be astonished, when God himself shall come, and the very things shall be manifested whereof it is now a Vexation only to understand the Report. Who would not receive the Kingdom of God when heretofore it was in Word, how must they submit unto it when it shall be actually in Deed? When he sent a Message to reign over them, and Officers to set up his Kingdom, but they did not receive that and did evil entreat them whom he had sent, what will they do when the King himself shall come with his Armies, and miserably destroy those wicked Men? He now speaketh from Heaven by his Word, and the Time draweth nigh when he will fulfill the same. This Word drops in by way of silent Thought to the Heart; or it is heard by hearing of the Ear, from a Fellow Creature, or it is conveyed unto us by Means of Ink and Paper; all which is but a still Voice, whereby God doth now manifest himself unto us. So he sent his only Son the eternal Word, which was made Flesh, who dwelt here and became as one of us, that God might be more familiar and acquainted with our Nature; and also to try whether we would thus receive and obey him. *But as many as received him, to them he gave Power to become the Sons of God*, John 1. 12. It is said nothing is more free than a Gift; so the tendring and offer thereof is free, so likewise the Receipt and Acceptance thereof is a free Act, for it might be refused. If

If God the Father had shewn his Greatness and Glory, then People would run unto him as now they ignorantly stay away for a little shadow and representation thereof from the World. But when he hath revealed himself in a little contemptible Appearance, this will prove whether they will take their Lot and Portion with that at present, and expect the greater things to come. Whether notwithstanding the Vail and Covering drawn over the things of God, they can yet discern the Glory that excelleth; whether they will believe this Word, which hath spoken of more than what is now seen or had. Again, If he should at present reveal himself in his Majesty and Power, then People would presently yield unto him who is mighty, much more than they now pay Reverence and Submission to the King and great Men, as he who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, doth exceed the greatest and highest of the Sons of Men. VVhich is so infinite, that no Compassion can be made to express the just and true distance. But when this God hideth himself, when he seems as one asleep, and taketh no notice; when he doth not actually give his Favour presently to them that do well, nor yet doth he immediately Manifest forth his severe displeasure against them who sin and transgress; when it is alike with Subjects and Enemies VVho fear God, and who fear him not; this will exercise our Faith and waiting, as also prove their Rebellion and Contempt. In-

Indeed there are the Promiſes and Threatnings annexed, and all muſt partake of the one, or they are liable to the other: But yet the Conditions of one are put into our power; and none, unleſs by his own fault or wilfullneſs, doth fall under the other. His Kingdom and Dominion is over all; every thing that can be named, or doth any where exiſt; but then he ruleth over them according to their ſeveral Natures. The Winds and Sea Obey him neceſſarily; Beaſts, Birds, and Creeping things, go conſtantly according to that Inſtinct implanted in them; which is as it were a Law unto them. To Man is committed Revelation and Reaſon for to guide him; nevertheleſs, he may diſregard, act contrary, or yield unto and comply with its dictates. So much is left to his freedom and choice. There is ſet before him Life and Good, Death and Evil, with a repeated inculcation to chooſe Life. And though when theſe two oppoſite things are ſimply and abſtractedly propoſed, every one hath ſo much Underſtanding as would preſerve, and make him happy: Yet the great doubt and miſtake is concerning the way and means of one or the other; which alſo are laid before the Sons of Men, and offered to their choice and liberty, as the End is. It might firſt of all be rationally and aſſuredly concluded, That where the End is Right, Good and Deſirable, ſo is every thing that neceſſarily tends towards it; for upon a rot-

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ten Stock and Foundation there can never be a ſure Building. So contrariwiſe, where the End is diſmal, and feared by every one, they might well ſuſpect the ſeveral ſteps leading towards it, and conſequently refrain to move a ſtep further, which they might if they would. As they evidently ſee and know that God hath put it into their power at firſt to go into one way or another; and when they are in a little, they may ſtand ſtill or go backwards, or rather turn aſide from out of it: So likewiſe by God's Grace and Invitation, *They may come unto Life*, John 5. 40. and it is *of themſelves that they fall into Death and Deſtruction*, Hoſ. 13. 9.

This laſt thing being attendant to their refuſal of coming unto God and Obeying his Voice, doth ſeem to imply as if they were forced. But if ſo, they would actually do it; for are Men ſtronger than He? God is Almighty, and muſt prevail, if it were the purpoſe of his Heart to compel Mankind unto his Obedience. He could raiſe up Hell from beneath, and ſet it evidently before our Eyes, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did the Fiery Furnace. He could even now Command his Angels to ſound the Trumpet (as at the laſt day when the dead ſhall hear his Voice) that every Nation, Country and Language, all that are now living, ſhould fall down and Worſhip him, or they ſhall be caſt into Hell. He could ſo order it even at this preſent time, That thoſe which

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do Iniquity, ſhall be caſt immediately thereupon into a Furnace of Fire; and then the boldeſt worker thereof would fear, tremble and refrain. He could ſtir up thoſe terrible ones from under the Earth, Devils and infernal Spirits, the Executioners of his Wrath (who ſhould over-awe poor Mortals) all one, as a mighty King with his Armies doth now make them do this or that thing at his pleaſure. For hath he not the ſame power as Man to whom he gave being, and hath before committed unto him the Power of doing whatever he doth. Cannot he who ſitteth upon the Circle of the Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof are as Graſhoppers, do as much, or rather more, than any two-footed Creature that now walks thereon? Cannot the High and Lofty One, who ſitteth upon his Throne, and commandeth over the Armies in Heaven (who are greater in power and might as that wide place above is bigger than this ſpot of ground here where we dwell) ſend forth his Authority, and execute the ſame here? Is this too far off when it is his Foot-ſtool? for he filleth all places and all things, even thoſe under the Earth with his preſence. *If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there,* Pſal. 139. 8. Even now he ſends forth his Lightning unto the Ends of the Earth, and his Arrows go throughout the World. But becauſe God doth not yet manifeſt his Power, and ſhew forth all his Might, a thought doth ariſe in them who know not God, as if he cannot do

this. They, who have a little more knowledge are sometimes apt to imagine, That because he acts here by outward means, which are but little and small, that by reason of them is the Defect; and they are unable to atchieve such great and mighty things? whereas his infinite Wisdom and Glory are here to be seen in ordaining strength out of weakness. VVho first made, he will also enable them to perform what he would have them to do. He can send forth his Angels or other Instruments, whom we have not known, nor heard of as yet.

A Temptation doth arise, that though God can, yet he will not do thus; for so we have heard in Old Time, and in our days over and over, and yet *all things continue as they were since the Creation.* But the Apostle in 2 *Pet.* 3. 5, 6. answers this by what God did of Old, both by Creation of, and Drowning the VVorld. *For this they are willingly ignorant of, That by the Word of God the Heavens were of Old, and the Earth standing out of the Water, and in the Water; whereby the World that then was, being overflowed with Water perished. But the Heavens and the Earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto Fire against the day of Judgment and perdition of Ungodly Men.* That same VVord which spake them first into Being, acquainted *Noah*, *Gen* 6. of the intended Flood; and afterwards this same word brought the VVaters; for God Commanded them. The same VVord hath likewise said, that it shall be

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thus in the latter days, to which we now haste.

Thus it is determined upon all those who in the mean time have been Ungodly, or are, or shall hereafter not give regard to the great God above, or are disobedient to him; for all such are ungodly, without God in the World, who do not live in sense of Submission and Duty under him. These might even now conceive, that as in the beginning the Lord laid the foundations of the Earth and it abideth, as they find by moving and dwelling thereon. As they see the gathering of the Waters which is called Sea, and as we behold the Heavens upheld, and the Stars in their Courses and Places: So surely doth the threatning lye against such, and will be fulfilled, when these things shall be so changed, as we are further foretold of. As before it was observed of the stedfastness and immutability of the Promise, from *Isa.* 45. So from 2 *Pet.* 3. it may be gathered of the utmost certainty of the Evil and Good things there spoken of: They seem therefore to be out of sight, and to come to prove how we in the mean while will be concerned and affected towards them. There is a little imperfect Good in the One at present, and a lesser Evil and Harm in the other; but God will so add further, that the one shall be perfected in Reward and Happiness, the other shall end in Punishment and Misery. *My Son forget not my Law, but let thine heart keep my Commandments, for Length of Days, and long*

Life and Peace ſhall they add unto you, Prov. 3. 1, 2. and when the firſt is ended, there ſhall ſucceed Immortality and Glory: And the Peace here ſhall go out in Raviſhment, Extaſie and unutterable Rejoycing. So again, Sin, which now hurts for a moment, doth bring on Torment for ever. What occaſions Sorrow and Vexation, doth deliver over to the VVorm which ſhall never die. VVhat occaſions Sickneſs and Pain, doth likewiſe bring forth Death and the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. All that is ſeen or had here, is but an earneſt of like and worſe things to come. The leſs do fore-run, and give notice of the greater. And as in the former caſe, by the comfort and ſatisfaction of the one, we ſhould much more deſire and pray after that which exceedeth: So by the ſenſible inconvenience and trouble of the latter way, we ſhould much more abhor and dread the End thereof, which is Death. As we now taſte and feel it is thus, ſo we may believe, and be fully aſſured it ſhall be ſo hereafter, as the faithful and true VVitneſs ſaith, *Behold I have told you before.* By the real Good of one way we may well depend further upon the ſubſtance of things hoped for. By the hurt and deceitfulneſs of the other, we may be ſufficiently forewarned of the Deſtruction and Miſery in that way.

The Nature of Rewards and Puniſhments, Exhortation and Dehortation, Promiſes and Threatnings, do denote that Man

Man is left to his Liberty and Freedom. All theſe do inform and acquaint him how things ſtand pertaining to him, That he might partake of the Good, and avoid the Evil. God hath thus eſtabliſhed the Connexion and Order of things. They are ſet before Mankind, and placed ſo near, that they are become as cloſely appendant to him as his Fleſh and Spirit, ſo they muſt have the one or the other. His trial is appointed in things abſolutely neceſſary, which he cannot be without, as Meat, Drink, and Rayment to the Body, and in Thoughts as to the Soul, which are the very Eſſence of it; for the Soul will ceaſe to be, when it ſhall ceaſe to think. And leſt the Soul ſhould degenerate into Sloth and Bruitiſhneſs, of that we are rouzed up to take heed by the Parable of the unprofitable Servant, whoſe Doom was, *Caſt him into outer Darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.* Who would not receive and aſcend up towards the Light, but walked all his days in the Miſt of Ignorance, He ſhall be thruſt down to the loweſt Dungeon, and be confined unto utter Darkneſs: For the former ſeeming Eaſe and Stupidity, there will ſucceed continued ſelf-indignation. His Soul was then employed about ſomewhat; and if not about that Talent intruſted with him by the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh, yet he had ſome little Thought, or ſeeming excuſe for his Refuſal and Diſobedience. The knowledge was conveyed in; the

Obligation and Necessity thereof was considered in the Mind, and there was a willing delay and putting it off. In those debates and reasonings within, there is a manifest thinking this or that way. Now the Scale turns on this side, and then on that. And as there is a capacity to think freely, so there is a power to do accordingly, or a contrary froward going on in his way, or a wretched doing nothing at all.

The Lord knoweth our frame, Psal. 103. 14. the disposal and tendency of each part of our Nature; and accordingly in his Word and Truth application is made to the Children of Men. To this end are those several kinds of Expostulation in the Psalms, Prophets, and throughout the Old and New Testament. Some things are to inform and teach the Understanding, others are to subdue and bring over the Will; and the several Affections are particularly spoken unto. So that read where you will, you may find some part of your Soul moved. And then there is the example of Saints recorded, who were Men of like Passions and Infirmities with our selves, that we also might do the same, which others have done before us. God addresseth himself to us as we are Men, to judge of the equality of his ways, and of what he saith and commandeth us. He bringeth us up, and implants a capacity to know the Good, and refuse the Evil. He giveth Senses to discern between one and the other.

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He acquaints us over and over with the very Nature of things at present, and also forewarns us of things to come.

Survey the whole Dispensation and Exercise of God's Dominion over us. Consider each part and method thereof. Look into the mystery of the Kingdom; Remember his doings of Old Time, Think upon what he doth now; and also take in the Conformation of all what he hath said and sworn he will yet perform: Then thou mayest understand, that as he made People free, so he would govern them as such. He would have them serve him with joyfulness and gladness of Heart, and what they do it should be with a willing and ready Mind; for the Lord loves the answer of such a Soul, when he saith, *Seek ye my Face*, Thy Face Lord will I seek. That comes at first as soon as he is called, and afterwards is in a continual readiness to receive further Direction and Command, and then is in an actual and speedy performance of the same. VVhere is a willing Mind there is no seeking out Excuses and Delays. There is no shifting and trying to put it off; There is no Controversie or Dispute of Mind, whether I should serve God presently or not. For if there is a right Knowledge of him, and of the Terms upon which we are to enter into his Service, we come as readily to him as one that was hired to the best of Masters according to the Flesh, who will give the greatest VVages, and most kind Usage. Saith

our Saviour unto his Diſciples and Followers, *Henceforth I call you not Servants; for the Servant knoweth not what his Lord doth. But I have called you Friends*, John 15. 15. Here is yet a nearer Relation and Honour, to be admitted into Friendſhip with him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Faith apprehends this exceeding Priviledge, and eſteems of it more than to have for aſſured Friends the King, all the Nobility and Gentry of this or the Neighbour Nations; Or if Love is leſſened when it is divided into ſo many Particulars, it is better than to have two, three, or a few only of the greateſt and wiſeſt Perſonages on Earth. Chriſt unto the Believers Soul is the chiefeſt of Ten Thouſand; nay, he is more to her than all the Perſons and Things in the World. Now where is an intimate Love and Union, (as we expect his Grace and Benefits, and hope for Gifts from him) ſo likewiſe we muſt do the things he ſaith, and whatever he doth require. Our Voice and Deſire is, *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly*; and his Anſwer is again to the Church, *And behold, I come quickly; and my Reward is with me, to give to every Man according as his work ſhall be*, Rev. 22. 12. And ſeeing the time allotted for that Work is ſhort, though it was ſpoken to the Traytor *Judas*, it may be alſo applied to his faithful Diſciples and Followers, *What thou haſt to do, do quickly*. We have his own Example and Words for it, *I muſt work the Works of him*

that ſent me while it is Day: The Night cometh when no Man can work, John 9. 4. Accordingly he did go about doing good and preaching the Kingdom of God, making known all things he had heard from his Father. The Wiſe Man calleth upon us, *Whatſoever thy Hand findeth thee to do, do it with all thy Might: For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave whither thou goeſt*, Eccleſ. 9. 10. So whatever God and his Chriſt commandeth and requireth of thee, do it with all convenient Speed and as ſoon as thou canſt before the Opportunity ſlip from thee, or the Means be taken away, or thy ſelf be cut off; for thou art but Fleſh and always dying. After this is done God may have more for thee: He will proportion thy Reward according to thy Labour. If thou diminiſheſt ought from that thou wilt loſe ſo much of a greater Recompence. The more thou doſt at this preſent, the more thou wilt receive for all Eternity: What is done each Day or Hour, is laying up a Treaſure for many Ages.

There may be ſomewhat of this ſignified in the Words of our Saviour, who ſpeaketh the ſame to us as he did to the Diſciples, *Ye ſay that there are Four Months and then cometh Harveſt: Lift up your Eyes, for the Fields even now are white unto Harveſt*, John 4. 35. And *he that reapeth, gathereth Fruit unto everlaſting Life*. We may think and deceive our ſelves that ſuch a Work is to be done hereafter, when if we conſider

sider throughly, all things are now ready for the Performance of the same. But admitting it were not to be done until then, yet such good Acts may be done in the mean while which are preparatory to that, as the Husbandman fits all things in the mean while; or we may in the Space between serve God to some other End and Purpose: That no Day pass over our Head without doing some thing to the Glory of God and to the Benefit of Souls. Every thing here is in order to eternal Life; and as we are here always going towards that, and the Life we now live is continually hastning towards its Period; so we should at all times make Provision against this shall fail to be received up into the other, that we may there continually partake of somewhat which we have done here. Indeed the Fruits of the Earth do spring up and are ripe at such certain Seasons of the Year according to the Climate or Countrey; but still the Husbandman hath some Employment all the Year round. The Kingdom of God over the Souls of Men is not confined to Times and Seasons, as in such an Age or Part of Life, to such a Month or Day of the Year. But this Work may be carrying on at all Times and Seasons. The Word may be preached in Season and out of Season, at Summer or Winter, Spring or Autumn, Sabbath or Week-day, in the Day-time or at Mid-night, as they are journeying or sitting still, in the Closet, Family or Congregation.

Truth

Truth shall spring out of the Earth, Psal. 85. 11. at what time it shall please the Lord to open the Fountains of the great Depth. And as the Wind bloweth when and whereſit listeth, so he shall give his Spirit to search it out. So again Righteousness shall look down from Heaven, when the Lord shall pour down his Spirit from on high; which as he hath done several Times already, so it may acquaint us further of the things there. He may instruct his Servants as those of old, in what Disposition of Body and Soul they must be in for to receive it. To get the foregoing Qualifications of Faith, Knowledge, Love of God, Obedience, Holiness, Humility, convenient Retirement and separating from their Brethren that they may the more approach unto God. These things do not so much depend upon the outward Circumstances of set and definite Times of the Year, but they come to pass at what Time pleaseth the Father, and we receive the Grace and use the Means to be Partakers thereof.

Known unto God are the great things he will do for his Church; for they are fixed in his eternal Purpose and Determination, it *is not for us to know the Times and Seasons which the Father hath put in his own Power*, Acts 1.7. Perhaps the very Reason why these are not clearly revealed and manifested unto us, is least in the mean while we should neglect our own Concern. Our Minds might so run upon what

things

things are to be done in the Generations following, that we ſhould leave undone what ought to be done in this Generation wherein we now live. As the VVoman of *Samaria* ſaith, *When the Meſſias is come he will tell us all things*, John 8. 25. ſo we might be apt to apprehend it, as to refuſe to learn any thing in the mean while: And when it is promiſed, *The Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord as the Waters cover the Sea*, Iſa. 11. 9. VVe might content our ſelves with our former Ignorance, and reject any further Knowledge and Inſtruction in the mean while.

Even thoſe great things of old time have been tranſacted by outward Means; and we ought ſtill to uſe thoſe Means which are in our Power, to put them forth with all our Skill and Might, and then let the Lord do what ſeemeth him good. We know not at firſt what a Bleſſing and Succeſs he may give unto them, but we may ſomewhat perceive it afterwards. Then things may riſe up beyond our Expectations, when in the Beginning we are apt to diſtruſt and faint in our Mind. Had our ſelves done nothing, or after we had undertaken it, then let it fall, then it was our own Refuſal that we were not Inſtruments in carrying on the Work of the Lord; or he might take it from us, and make choice of and give it unto others who ſhould throughly perform his Will. If the Way is ſhewed unto us, and we are put in ſuch a Capacity, we have alſo an

Impulſe

Impulſe and Preſſing of Mind to the ſame, and the VVork is right and good; as appears evidently from his VVord and the Examples of old, there we may, and indeed ought to walk in that VVay, and actually do according to the Power given us, and alſo comply with the Dictates of a rectified and truly informed Conſcience. If God may be glorified by ſuch an Action and Good may be done unto others, this ſhould be indeed performed: And ſeeing it ſhould be done by ſome one, why not by thee to whom he hath given the Knowledge thereof, endued with Ability, and is ſtirring thee up by his Spirit. We may learn from *Exodus* 4. 10,11,12,13. that God is not pleaſed with Excuſes or Delays, or with alledging our own Imperfections; for he made us at firſt, and can alſo mend and increaſe what he hath begun. He ſent forth further Strength and Ability according as the thing requires. The ſtammering Lips may at length ſpeak plain as in the Beginning of Speech. The Voice, which was haſty and confuſed, may become clear and diſtinct: And who acquaints at firſt in general with the Errand that he ſhould go to ſuch a Place, and do ſuch a thing, will afterwards according to his own divine Method in *Acts* 9. 6. teach particularly what he ſhall ſay: And put the very Words into our Mouth a little before, or *in the very ſame Hour*, Mat. 10. 19. juſt as they are to be uttered forth: Remembring ſtill that we are but Inſtruments in the Hands

Hands of God. We are to receive the Thoughts he puts into our Heart, and to speak them out with our Lips; but we can say no more nor think of pertaining to him than what he suggests and puts into our Mind. We are to execute what he puts into the Power of our Hands, but we can do no more. Our God doth not require more than he hath given. Those Talents are to be exercised and traded with that which he hath committed unto us; but he will never call us to Account for more than we have received: So we are to use Diligence and Labour according to what we can.

In the first Place we should pray unto God, *O learn me true Understanding and Knowledge that I may keep thy Commandments.* Now there are either things to be abstained from, or things to be done. The first are properly Prohibitions or Forbiddings; but the Word Commandment imports Duty, which is to be done. That must be discerned and known before it can be begun; and because there may be Hindrances and Oppositions, those also are to be seen and overcome that it may be accomplished. In the Way to Heaven there are many Turnings aside, which we are to be acquainted with and avoid that we may keep on still in the right Way; for if we go out there is so much Time and Labour lost to no purpose, which might have set so far on. The best Use hereof is to be more careful for the future to keep on right. In every worldly Business

and

and Design there are such foregoing Means. And if they do at first hit upon those which are true and prudent, they do sooner perform the matter in hand; but if they make use of false and foolish Means, they go backward or round about, and so they are further off or they wander: And then either they do not accomplish, or it is much a longer Time before they obtain what they would have.

Indeed there is another kind of Method in things pertaining to God than what is commonly made use of as to the things of this World: For though the same Wisdom, Diligence and Activity are to be used towards the future and spiritual things as we see People do in their present Designs and Enterprises, yet we ought not to venture upon all manner of Means. *For the Word of God is right and all his Works are done in Truth*, Psal. 33. 4. That Word is to be made our Direction all along, and we are to do nothing for God but what is holy and good: So we learn manifestly from his revealed Will, and also we find by the Success and Event thereof, for if his own peculiar Servants do turn aside from the holy Commandment delivered unto them, or do that which is sinful or doubtful (not being of Faith and full Perswasion of Mind) it doth not prosper unto them, but they are most commonly defeated; even the Wicked and Transgressors, which do most flourish and have the things they desire and endeavour after, have

not

not a comfortable Enjoyment thereof, or they are given to vain Imaginations, tormenting Desires, continual Restlessness and Turmoil of Mind: So they have plenty, but no Satisfaction. If there is but one *Achan*, a single Babylonish Wedge, this troubleth the whole Camp of *Israel*, and the Israelites are smitten before their Enemies. And this is many times a Reason, not only of the common Afflictions of God's faithful People in their private Persons, but also his Church hath laboured under long continued Persecutions and Adversities; out of which they have attempted to redress themselves by unwarrantable and evil Means, which have been frustrate and came to naught, and then by giving occasion to the Enemy to think that they were not so holy as they pretended; and thereupon they were kept faster in Bondage, and tormented yet more.

We ought carefully to use the Means, but we are in no wise to trust in them, nor seek to the Arm of Flesh as to put any Reliance thereon. God is exceeding jealous of his own Glory, that as all things are of him, so he would have all ascribed unto him: And therefore he doth purposely make use of little outward Means, that it may be known that they have not done it, but he who sits above. He acts in an invisible Manner: He works and we see him not. By the silent but effectual Operations of his Spirit. *Which the World receiveth not because it seeth him not*, John 14. 17. They do

do not understand, but yet they are moved at the Presence of him in whom they imagine it dwells? His Flesh is the same with theirs, and yet they *narrowly look on and consider him.* But if they had a spiritual Eye, or if they had an inward Sense to perceive somewhat of the same Nature within themselves, they would be much more over-awed with that: And yet they would be inexpressibly more moved with the Presence of the God of the Spirits of all Flesh *As Wax melteth before the Fire, so let the Wicked perish at the Presence of God,* Psal. 68. 2. which will be really fulfilled when himself shall bow the Heavens and come down. Even now at the Manifestation of the Spirit of God, Satan and his Legions do fly and disappear. The Devils believe and tremble; for they more quickly discern and fear than People in the Flesh; and being more apprehensive of God's Power, and also being conscious that they are liable to it, they either make haste to get away, or they lie under a more grievous Terror and Apprehension thereof against the Time it shall be executed upon them. *The Lord rideth upon a swift Cloud, and shall come into* Egypt, *and the Idols shall be moved at his Presence,* Isa. 19. 1. As Light doth dispel Darkness, one Beam or Ray of the Sun drives it away when it overspreads the Face of the whole Earth: So it is of the spiritual Light and of the spiritual Darkness; where the spiritual Light doth appear and shoot it self

forth, it makes all Ignorance and Error to utterly vaniſh away.

The Father of Lights doth ſometimes ſend out a Ray and Communication of his own Nature. *O ſend out thy Light and thy Truth*, Pſal. 43. 3. *Thou that dwelleſt between the Cherubims ſhine forth*, Pſal. 80. 1. He now and then appears a little more, and makes a Diſcovery of himſelf. The God of all things, who hideth himſelf (if I may ſo expreſs it) behind the Skreen of his Creatures, doth look out a little. Who hath put a Vail on his Face, he doth a little draw it aſide. Who hath dark Waters and thick Clouds to cover him, yet he looks out from behind the Pillar; and as he troubled the Egyptians of old, ſo doth he even now ſeem to diſturb the Inhabitants of the Earth; for ſo they are diſturbed when they have any Apprehenſion or ſpiritual Sight of him. And therefore they avoid it and they ſhut their Eyes againſt him. *Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up they will not ſee, but they ſhall ſee*, Iſa. 26. 11. As long as they can refuſe the Knowledge of God, they will refuſe it: As long as they can reſiſt and deſpiſe his Righteouſneſs and Truth, they will do ſo: But at length there ſhall ſuch an abundant Meaſure thereof be poured down, that they ſhall both know and conſider, tremble and be aſtoniſhed do whatever they can.

By the Help of God one of his Saints (who is the ſame with others) ſhall put an hundred

to

to Flight, and Ten ſhall chaſe a Thouſand. And this ſhall not be done by Sword or Spear, by outward Strength or Power of the Hands, but with the weakeſt Member and lighteſt thing in Man, *viz.* It ſhall be done by the Tongue and by the Breath of his Lips. *And he ſhall ſmite the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his Lips ſhall he ſlay the Wicked,* Iſa. 11. 4. The Lord ſhall put Words into their Mouth that the Ears which hear thereof ſhall tingle: And though they are backward to hear, yet he ſhall cauſe them to hear. Now Words are vain, light, and the Sound of them ſoon paſſeth away: They may be ſlighted off when they come from a weak and helpleſs Man: For, doth he talk of great things who is little and contemptible himſelf? Doth he ſpeak of Power and Might, who is but Fleſh, a feeble Creature, and like a Reed ſhaken with the Wind? Doth he preach of Rewards and Puniſhments in whoſe Power it is not either to do good or hurt? For the utmoſt is a ſlight Pleaſure or little Inconvenience. Doth he talk of Kingdoms, Glory and Riches, when perhaps himſelf is abject, vile and poor? Many ſuch like things might be objected againſt us if we came in our own Name, or if we did promiſe them by our own Merit, Excellency and Power. But ſeeing we come in the Name of the Lord who hath created and ordained all things; who will do nothing, but he will reveal it to his Servants, the Prophets. What-

ever his eternal Purpoſe and Decree is concerning Mankind, he will ſome way make it known unto them, by acquainting it to ſome who are to publiſh it unto others. He hath ſo ordered that it might be known. They do all hear the Rumour and they might *ſeek after*, Acts 15. 17. and find it.

Salvation and the good things of God are forced upon none. They may be brought nearer and preſſed more urgently upon ſome than upon others, yet ſtill there is Liberty of Refuſal. Again, they are not ſo far off from any, but they may come near and receive them; and to whom it is moſt inculcated and offered, yet it is not all done to their Hand. For Trial is had whether they will ſeek yet further. There muſt be ſomewhat of Man's own Act and willing.

God doth manifeſt himſelf to be friendly and loving unto us, by that conſtant Proviſion of temporal Mercies, and alſo by doing all that lies on his Part for ſpiritual good things. It is expected what we will do reciprocally as to what he doth require of us. Saith the Son of God, *As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you. Continue ye in my Love. If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my Love, even as I have kept my Father's Commandments and abide in his Love*, John 15. 9, 10. Here we have Aſſurance of the divine Favour to us; and we are inſtructed how we may continue and expreſs our good Will towards him, *viz.* by keeping

keeping his Commandments. God is no Reſpecter of Perſons; but whoſoever of the Children of Men doth this, he is accepted with him. *Whoſoever doth the Works of* Abraham, *he is a Friend of God, as* Abraham *was*, James 2. 23. which Word, *Friend*, imports that we do a thing preſently and readily at his requiring. By much Importunity we we may get a Kindneſs from a common Neighbour; which he will do not out of Affection and Eſteem towards us, but to be freed from the Trouble which we give him by our Importunity. But where is real Love and Friendſhip, there is conſtant Readineſs to do mutual Offices even before the other asks, or upon the leaſt Intimation that ſuch a thing would be acceptable unto him.

Now to apply the Caſe as it ſtands between God and Mankind. *As ſoon as they hear of me, they ſhall obey me*, Pſal. 18. 44. Nothing can be more juſt and reaſonable than that he ſhould require Obedience of his Creatures. Is he not more to all of them and to each ſingly than one Man is to another? He is infinitely more kind than Father or Mother, Husband, Friend or Brother; for even he ordained theſe Relations, and ſtirs up, (what he firſt put in) thoſe Bowels of Mercy and Compaſſion one to another. Of God are all things, and now he ordereth them as it pleaſeth him: So he is the Author of all good we ever received; and as he made, he doth now ſuſtain us, and loadeth

us with Benefits. May he not expect ſomething from us, even all that we can render unto him: To acknowledge him in all things and to walk always in the Way he ſhews unto us, and to obſerve thoſe Commandments he gives us. Lord! How ſtrange is it, that a Creature ſhould make any Diſpute or Controverſie concerning it? As we live by him, ſo it is meet we ſhould live as he would have us: Both the Members of Body and Faculties of Soul ſhould do according as he made and deſigned them. *Therefore glorifie God in your Body and in your Spirit which are God's*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. The Potter makes Veſſels to ſerve for thoſe Uſes he intended them; and other Artificers, which frame moving Inſtruments, make them turn or go as they pleaſe. Hath not the Lord the ſame Power and Underſtanding, who hath given ſuch Skill and Capacity to others. And he who faſhioned every Part of us might alſo have ordained that all within us ſhould neceſſarily have ſo moved according to his Command and Will, as the Pulſe continually beats to keep Life and Motion. Who formed the Heart to turn either way, to Good or Evil, he might have determined it only to the firſt; who enabled us to think this or that, he might have confined us to good only; and he might have kept out from thence Wickedneſs and Vanity, all one as we now remain ignorant of many hidden and unſearchable things.

If

If we had a right Knowledge of God we might diſcern how he is the Creator of us and of all things; who made my ſingle Perſon, he hath made Millions of the ſame Sort: And who created Mankind, he hath alſo Ten Thouſand times ten Thouſand ſeveral Sorts of Creatures both living and inanimate, all which are for his own Glory and to miniſter unto him. *Who hath called the Generations from the Beginning*, Iſa. 41. 4. and ordained them to ſucceed one another after that Manner as we ſee they now do. And ſhall a ſingle Atom, an individual Duſt and Aſhes refuſe one Moment to comply with his Will? Nay, if ſeveral do ſo beſides, yet it is thine and the other's ſingle Diſobedience, which make up and encourage the Corruption of many. But let their Number be never ſo great, they are but as a Swarm of Flies and Locuſts: And if they do mutter forth hard Speeches or commit ungodly Deeds, it is but in very little and ſudden Acts. And what is all this Sin and Wickedneſs to the whole World of Creatures which declare the Glory of God, and ſhew forth all his Praiſe? What are the refractory and ſtubborn Worms of the Earth to thoſe Armies of Heaven which fulfil all the Pleaſure of the Almighty? When he commands the Children of Men to do after this or that manner, they go on frowardly in the Way of their Heart, yet his Throne is for ever eſtabliſhed above the Circuit of Heaven; and there he ſits governing the World; and for

ought we know a Thousand others. God exercises the supream and alone Authority over all. *Who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a flaming Fire.* The Spirits are for the sudden and quick Dispatch of what he would have done, and for the effectual Performance of the same. And the flaming Fire is to burn up and consume all that lets or hinders; and so make way for his Purpose: He hath already fixed and ordained things in their appointed Courses and Places: He hath appointed those several Motions and Bounds: He hath sent forth his Word and given a Law. He garnished out the Heavens by his Wisdom, and laid out the Foundations of the Earth by his Understanding: And we see it abideth according to his Ordinance; for all things serve him.

Even Man doth all things which he is necessarily obliged unto; nay, which he could refrain from, but with some visible Inconvenience. Man goeth forth to his Work and to his Labour until the Evening. Now there is as much Difficulty in that bodily Service as in the other Duty required of him by God, and yet he readily doth that, though it takes up more of his Strength and Time. The utmost of bodily Labour is for Meat, Drink and Raiment. Which God could have provided him without his own Labour, as he doth for the Ravens and Fowls of the Air. But now it is so ordered, to see if Man will labour for Food and Raiment, and there he doth. *Wherefore do ye*

spend

ſpend Money for that which is not Bread, and labour for that which ſatisfieth not, Iſa. 55. 2. The Hand withereth, the Work ceaſeth, it is all determined within the ſeveral Days, both the Meat and Labour thereof. The firſt periſheth in the Mouth and is utterly conſumed in the Draught; the other is tireſome and not very material afterwards. The Wages are mean and ſatisfie not. But now God hath promiſed a Gift and Reward, which is eternal Life and Bleſſedneſs; And this is to be had upon foregoing Conditions; which may be performed by the Soul, as the Bodily Service is done by the outward Members. *Incline your Ear and come unto me. Hear and your Soul ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure Mercies of* David, *Iſa.* 55. 3. Here God ſends forth an Invitation and Command, with the utmoſt Aſſurance of fulfilling the ſame. It is obſervable how the Preface runs, *Incline your Ear and come unto me: Hear and your Soul ſhall live.* He addreſſeth to the firſt Stubbornneſs and Averſation in Man, to get him to hear the Voice and Propoſals of his Maker, for he doth ſend forth ſo many gracious Words and preſſing Arguments, that whoſoever doth attend to them, he muſt be perſwaded. Our God can give alike and greater Reaſons why all Mankind ſhould ſerve him all the Days they live here upon Earth, as they do this or that for one another, or as they have Imaginations to walk in their own Ways.

God

God is not a Man that he ſhould Lye, Numb. 23. 9. as Courtiers and great Perſonages, very free in Promiſes, but ſlack in Performances. But he doth give the greateſt ſatisfaction, upon which whoſo conſiders, he may build the ſtrongeſt Aſſurance that he ſhall receive greater and more certain things by keeping cloſe and ſtedfaſt to his Covenant than by turning aſide from it. From the Intention and ſincere Deſire of our Soul, eſpecially when we ſeek for all Knowledge and Direction by the Word and Prayer, We may as ſurely conclude, as if God ſpake openly unto us out of a Cloud, or from the Battlements of Heaven. The conſideration of things to come may at all times weigh down the Thoughts and Temptation of the preſent. The Eye may be continually fixed on the Recompence of Reward, and ſo diſdain and refuſe the ſudden Pleaſures of Sin, or the little profit of Tranſgreſſion. Such things may be for ever kept in the Imagination of the Hearts of People, that they ſhall ſeldom or never utterly turn aſide from God's Commandments, and which ſhall overcome the Temptations of Satan, the World, the Luſts of the Fleſh, the Deſires of the Mind, or the Dictates of Pride, Obſtinacy and Frowardneſs. What doth eſtabliſh and confirm thoſe who are already therein, will alſo bring others in the Right Way. God is able to bring thoſe home who at preſent are eſtranged from him, by the ſame Method which others have been before. He can

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uſe and make known the ſame Perſwaſion, wherewith others are actually perſwaded, and they yield to take upon them the Yoke of his Son. He knows all the Hearts of the Children of Men, every ſingle Thought afar off, each particular moving and inclination. He underſtandeth all their Works, and ſeeth all their Ways. As alſo he is not ignorant of all the Devices of the Enemy, To beat and keep them off from his Knowledge and Obedience. So that he can take away what lets and hinders, or over-rules it: And that which makes for Good, he can further and compleat the ſame. *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him,* Iſa. 57. 18. who perceives all the Wandrings, can alſo lead him back. Who doth behold all the ſtumblings in Darkneſs. He can ſuddenly bring Light into the Soul, that ſhe may ſee her way. Who doth clearly diſcover all the imaginations of Evil, He can alſo preſently ſcatter and defeat them. If there be any Thoughts of Good, any wiſhes and deſires towards it; he can cheriſh them up into acts and habits of doing well. God, who maketh to Will, can alſo make to Do in his good Pleaſure, and in his own Order, though this is commonly after the other. He brings near that which was afar off, and inclines what before was averſe and unwilling. Who can underſtand, and alſo he doth know thoſe cloſe actings and contrivances, the ſecret and hidden things of the Heart, thoſe reſerved and innermoſt Thoughts, the

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Bottom Imaginations (if I may ſo expreſs it) or what yet lies under Ground, or is covered over in the inward Man: The deceitful Windings and Turnings are more than can be reckoned up. We cannot fathom and comprehend all that lies in our own Heart, much leſs in others. But thou, O Lord, knoweſt all. *I the Lord ſearch the Heart and try the Reins*, to ſee and diſcover if there is any thing more. So he, who knows all things, can alſo apply things accordingly. He can adapt his Grace unto their Corruption, his Truth unto their Error, and his Mercy to all their former Sins. He hath a Balm to all their Sores, for who doth perfectly underſtand the Nature of that, and alſo the Remedy, there he can recover whom he will. Now God doth know throughly the Nature of every thing which he hath made. *I have ſeen his Ways and will heal him: I will lead him alſo and reſtore Comforts to him and his Mourners*, Iſa. 57. 18.

God doth not things ſuddenly; for our Faith and Waiting are to be exerciſed in the mean while; and therefore his gracious Promiſes are commonly future, what he doth phraſe Thoughts of Good, even to give an expected End. Yet in the mean while he requires that we prepare and be found ready. To *be as thoſe that wait for the coming of the Bridegroom, that when he comes we may open to him immediately*, Luke 12. 36. Agreeable hereunto is the Practice and Example of thoſe of old. The Diſciples

ples all went as ſoon as ever they were called, and left their worldly Buſineſs. So did the Labourers in the Vineyard go as ſoon as they were ſeverally hired. Thoſe converted to the Chriſtian Faith believed and lived accordingly the firſt or ſecond Time after they had heard it preached unto them. So when *Paul* was called forth; he conferred not with Fleſh and Blood, he had nothing to do with carnal Conſiderations or worldly Inducements, no preſent Motive nor yet a like Danger and Inconvenience did hinder or excuſe with him, but he *immediately went to* Jeruſalem. Undoubtedly all theſe did for the beſt and God was well pleaſed with them. He did accept and reward them more than thoſe who ſeek out for Excuſe and Delay, or ſuch who firſt refuſe to hear his Gracious call; or if they do at any Time hear or it is made known unto them, yet they will not yield unto it.

The Word of Exhortation ſtands continually for all People both young and old to hear and read it. The Spirit and the Bridegroom ſay always, *come*, There is one knocking at the Door of their Hearts for Admiſſion, God is ready at all Times to ſet up his Kingdom within us, his Law is already written in our Heart and inward Parts. He ſends his Prophets riſing up early and ſittting down late. Who being dead, ſpeak yet unto us in their Writings. There are conſtant Dictates of Mind to ſerve and obey our Maker. There are

are Examples of thoſe who do it in our Age and Circumſtances of Life. There is hardly a Chapter or Verſe throughout the whole Bible, but ſome way or other calls and ſtirs us up. The Scripture is opened and alledged. The Word preached in the ſeveral Congregations throughout our Land, and in all the Nations of the World are a Sermon to us alſo: For we are the ſame Creatures and ſtand in the very ſame Relation to the great God over all, as thoſe ſeveral Perſons who hear ſuch and ſuch Truths with their outward Ears. We might alſo know and hear more than we do; and thoſe who hear and underſtand are to declare it unto us, to acquaint their Neighbours and Kinsfolks, and they to others: So that the Word of God might dwell richly and have free Paſſage among us.

There is a ſufficient Call and Warning to all People in their ſeveral Generations and Ages of Life, *God now commandeth all Men every where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given Aſſurance unto all Men in that he hath raiſed him from the Dead*, Acts 17. 31. As every one knows Chriſt to be a Saviour, ſo there is the ſame Notice conveyed that he is to be our Judge: And as God ſhall bring every ſecret thing into Judgment, all the Actions of our Lives, for each ſingle Day will be called to account: So it will be demanded why ſuch and

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ſuch did not come when they were called, as they ſenſibly knew by a powerful Conviction over their Spirits, when it was inculcated over and over, to Day if ye will hear his Voice harden not your Heart. When they might have conſidered more and more, and themſelves did find that the more they did conſider, the more they were preſſed inſtantly to cloſe with Chriſt; and therefore they did put off conſidering their Wayes. They might at ſuch an Opportunity have heard God's Word (which would have urged them to have turned from their evil Ways, and therefore they would not attend to them. They might at ſuch a Day and by ſuch Means have learned the Knowledge and Fear of the Lord, but they would not. His Statutes were laid before them, but they would not let the Ears hear which were made to hear; nor the Eyes ſee which were ordained for that End. And further, when the Thoughts thereof did recur to the Mind, they would put them far away. When God riſes up and enters into Judgment, how ſhall Men anſwer for ſuch things?

And whoſoever now looketh upon or hears what is written in theſe Lines, and he is convinced of the Truth and Sincerity of them, but if he ſhould go away and not comply with the Purport thereof, or be willingly ignorant, or take no notice for fear he ſhould be brought over unto God more ſuddenly than he otherwiſe intended, how will he give account to the

Judge

Judge of all Men for the same? Even to that God who knows all his Thoughts and Imaginations concerning this or any other matter, who will reprove and set the things he hath done in order before him; even from the Time he had the Beginning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil unto the Day of his Death?

God knows all things, but we know not as God knoweth; and therefore we are so puzzled and distracted in things pertaining to him. He seeth all things in Heaven and Earth and under the Earth at one Sight, and knoweth all things to the utmost as they are known. But we now see one thing and then another, in order and Succession of Time, as he shews them unto us. Those Things which are more hidden and invisible, he reveals them by his Word and Spirit; and still we know nothing perfectly and comprehensively. And it may be all confined to things pertaining to us Men, which is not the Ten Thousandth Part of the things to be known, nor yet one Half of what doth immediately relate unto and concern us. The Sum and Comprehension of all is to know God and his Law, our Duty to him in each particular, and when we do vary from it.

It may be observed that the whole Scripture (which is called the Lord's Book) may be all reduced to this. Besides the natural imprinted Knowledge, God is there more discoverd to us, by the History of the Creation of the World, his Manifestations unto his Servants that

that worſhipped and feared him, his wonderful Works that he did from Time to Time, the Deſcriptions given of him in ſundry Places, and alſo the Commandments enjoyned to the Sons of Men. The Law was given by *Moſes* unto which he added much Exhortation to the Obſervance thereof: So did *David* and the Prophets, whoſe Writings were to preſs People unto Obedience and a Reproof of Tranſgreſſion. Which laſt was an orderly Declaration of Matter of Fact and according to Truth how People did turn aſide from the Commandments delivered unto them. It was a Telling of or Declaration unto the Houſe of *Jacob* their Sins and Tranſgreſſions. Which was expreſſed in general or more particular Terms; but yet ſo plainly that every Offender might underſtand himſelf was ſpoken of and called upon for to amend his Doings.

There is a ſtrong Senſe and Obligation upon the Heart of Man to keep the Law of his Creator; and he is ſenſible of as much every Time he is put in Remembrance thereof. As on the other hand, he is troubled with Shame, Regret and Condemnation when he thinks of, and more eſpecially when he is told of his Sin and Error. This proceeds from the Conſciouſneſs of having offended God, and from the Fear of his Anger and Judgment.

A ſecret Thought doth ariſe from Ignorance or Unbelief, that either God doth not ſee or not take notice of ſuch evil Deeds and will not

require for them: But such an one brings their Sin to Remembrance and makes it recorded before God; which otherwise might fall to the Ground and be forgotten by him. Hence hath arose that Hatred and unkind Usage to the Prophets, Ministers and Servants of God for speaking of and reproving the People of their several Generations of their Sin and Disobedience. This alone did put some Check and Stop to Transgression, and so the less was committed, and consequently there was less to account for before God. But in those Ages when all Flesh had corrupted its Way upon Earth, and there was none to oppose the Torrent of Iniquity; yet God, who sits above, both saw and knew the whole Course of Transgression, all one as if Ten Thousand of his Saints did cry aloud against it. This will be clearly manifested at the Day of Judgment, when God will disclose and make known the several Steps and Degrees of Irreligion and Wickedness, both of Generations and single Persons, of Countries and Families, whereof we knew and heard nothing at all. When the Lord shall write and rehearse up all things as they were done from the Beginning of the World. The Sin of *Judah* is written with a Pen of Iron, and graven with the Point of a Diamond; and so it remains before God although no Man ever spoke thereof by Word of Mouth, or committed it to Ink and Paper. It may be, that the several Acts are willingly forgotten by the Persons who

who committed the ſame, but God will remember them to the impenitent and hard of Heart; and he will renew the Memory of them to the Sinner's own Mind and Conſcience. As the Sinner doth now act and continue in the ſame, he doth treaſure up unto himſelf Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, who will render unto every Man according to his Deeds, *Rom.* 2.5,6. whether good or evil, as is expreſſed in the following Verſes.

Here again it appears, that the ſeveral Actions of Life will come into judgment and Retribution ſhall be made to the Perſon accordingly. So that in how many things he doth well he will be accepted, and himſelf would have notice taken thereof. If he ſin, that alſo lies at the Door: Which will paſs either into Examination and Condemnation, or the utmoſt to be hoped thereof is Pardon and Forgiveneſs, that God would not remember, or not impute it. But this is certain, for the Scripture affirms poſitively thereof, that many ſhall be actually puniſhed for the ſame. For, *Thoſe that have done Iniquity ſhall be caſt into a Furnace of Fire*, Mat. 13. 41, 42. and *They that have done evil ſhall ariſe unto the Reſurrection of Damnation*; John 5. 29. yet of thoſe who eſcape by Repentance, they certainly ſuffer this Loſs. It would be better for them throughout all Eternity if they had never committed ſuch Acts of Sin. Beſides, that the Time wherein they committed

Iniquity might have been ſpent in well-doing; and ſo they are deprived of the Recompence they might have had for that. Though a Sinner do evil an hundred Times and his Days be prolonged, yet it ſhall be well with them that fear the Lord, that fear before him. Both Manner of Ways will come into account, and they will have a different End. It will be certainly better for them who lived in Obedience and Holineſs in thoſe Days of their Fleſh, wherein others did, and themſelves might have lived in Sin and Wickedneſs. That Son who ſaid to his Father, *Lo, theſe many Years do I ſerve thee; neither tranſgreſſed I at any time thy Commandment, his Father anſwered him, Son, Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine*, Luk. 15. 29, 31. which was a larger and much better Portion and Proviſion than what was before, or afterwards given unto the prodigal and diſobedient Son. Again, though a Sinner ſhould come to Repentance, yet the ſooner he doth, it will be certainly better for him; becauſe he will be more ſure of God's Favour and Acceptation, and alſo he will ſooner bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, and make a Way for his own Reward; whereas *All his former Days were conſumed in Vanity and Trouble*, Pſal. 78. 33, They will not turn to good Account; neither doth he deſire that they ſhould come into Judgment; for it will ſtand in no ſtead and turn to no Benefit unto him; but encreaſe the Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of Soul, that he

he did not in those Days serve the Lord in Righteousness, Holiness and doing good. For these Works would follow him, when the other things are absolutely perished, and he wishes that he had never done them.

Here is a real Argument not to continue in Sin one Moment longer; for notwithstanding the present Pleasure and Conveniency, hereby he misses of so much more Happiness and Advantage. Again, he should not a Minute longer neglect Obedience and doing good, for he loses so much of a full Reward.

Thus much is signified from the Words, of the *righteous Judgment of God who will render to every one according to his Deeds. And so it is written, Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven*, Mat. 5. 11, 12, *For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father with his Angels, and then he shall reward every Man according to his Works*, Mat. 16. 27. *And every Man shall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour*, 1 Cor. 3. 8. *Wo unto their Soul for they have rewarded Evil unto themselves. Say ye to the Righteous that it shall be well with him, For they shall eat the Fruit of their Doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him: For the Reward of his Hands shall be given him*, Isa. 3. 9, 10, 11. *According to their Deeds, accordingly he will repay, Fury to his Adversaries, Recompence to his Enemies, to the Islands*

he will repay Recompence, Iſa. 59. 18. *The great God that formed all things, both rewardeth the Fool and rewardeth Tranſgreſſors*, Prov. 26. 10. *As thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee, thy Reward ſhall return upon thine own Head*, Obad. 15. *Receiving in themſelves that Recompence of their Error that was meet*, Rom. 1. 27. *Like as the Lord of Hoſts thought to do unto us according to our Ways and according to our Doings, ſo hath he dealt with us*, Zech. 1. 6. *And all the Churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts: And I will give unto every one of you according to your Works*, Rev. 2. 13. There are ſundry other like Places in Scripture, which the more they are conſidered and looked into, they do the more demonſtate the preſent Doctrine, how that the future Retribution and Recompence ſhall be proportioned and adjuſted according to the Deeds of Men, as it will be yet more clearly ſeen at the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. It ſhall be openly diſcloſed and ſhewed unto every one. Though it hath been hitherto hidden from ſome becauſe they would not ſearch the Scriptures, for there they might have found it ſo, and accordingly have prepared to have given up their Accounts. The good may be hence quickned to do more, to take hold of every Opportunity, to lay up a greater Foundation againſt the Time to come, to ſeek and do the Work of the Lord diligently, and to improve every Talent to the utmoſt: And the

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evil might presently have ceased to do wickedly, turn and be more zealous in the other Way.

Faith apprehends so of things future, as Memory and Recollection is to the past. Herein appears the Excellency of the Understanding and reasonable Soul, that she sees things afar off and remembers those behind. But those things here are scarce worth our Remembrance; but what things we are further told of, they are all Wonder and Astonishment; because they are so exceeding great and enduring: Which will fill the Soul though opened wide and to the utmost, and satisfie every Wish and Desire, and these things are always to remain. When these things shall be present before us, we shall admire and be vexed within our selves that we did not more towards the obtaining them. Even thus it will be of those who considered and did most that usually Men do. Our Fathers received the Promises and saw them afar off, they now stand more abundantly confirmed unto us, being so indubitably made known that we are more fully perswaded of them, and do embrace them. So the Exhortation runs yet more forcible, to cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God, and to do all things that we may be found accepted of him at the last Day.

Even thus much we may discern at present, that the Lord sitteth above all his Creatures.

He hath revealed how we the Inhabitants of the Earth are to behave our ſelves towards him. He hath prepared his Seat for Judgment and his Kingdom ruleth over all, neither is any Creature that is not manifeſt in his Sight: But all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do. We cannot know him as he knoweth us, for he ſeeth us and all our Ways clearly; but we now ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly. And as we are mere Creatures, who have nothing but what we have received, ſo we know nothing but what he firſt made known and revealed unto us.

Our Saviour abode on the Earth Forty Days after his Paſſion on the Croſs and Reſurrection from the Grave, ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, *Acts* 1. 3. very few of which are recorded. And though many things are written which he made known in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, yet the beloved Diſciple *John* ſaith, *Many other things truly did Jeſus in the Preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this Book*, John 20. 30. So before his coming into the World God diſcovered his Will by Prophets, and holy Men ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt. And there have been ſince further Manifeſtations of divine Knowledge and Truth: And yet ſtill the Skies will be more opened and Righteouſneſs ſhall be poured down. *Drop down ye Heavens from above and let the Skies pour down Righteouſneſs: Let the Earth open, and let them bring forth Salvation,*

vation, and let Righteouſneſs ſpring up together, I the Lord have created it, Iſa. 45. 8. *He ſhall come down like Rain upon the mowen Graſs, as Showers that water the Earth,* Pſal. 72. 6. *Truth ſhall ſpring out of the Earth,* Pſal. 85. 11. Both as to the Element it ſelf, and alſo as to the Inhabitants thereof, *Let the People praiſe thee, O God, let all the People praiſe thee. Then ſhall the Earth yield her Increaſe, and God, even our own God ſhall bleſs us,* Pſal. 67. 5, 6. He ſhall make known thoſe Arts and Means that the Earth ſhall yield her Increaſe ſo abundantly, that there ſhall be no hungry and empty Soul; but there ſhall be more than ſufficient for every Creature whatever. He ſhall give ſuch a plentiful Fleece on the Sheep, and may diſcover thoſe other Ways for cloathing as to cover all the naked in our Land. *Bring ye all the Tithes into the Store-Houſe, that there may be Meat in mine Houſe, and prove me now herewith, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, If I will not open the Windows of Heaven, and pour ye out a Bleſſing that there ſhall not be room enough to receive it,* Mal. 3. 10. Mankind hath been hitherto proved, whither they will obey and truſt in their God. The poor hath been a long while ſuffered among them to ſee whether they will will provide for and do them good; and they have not yet been ſo obedient and truſted unto him as they ſhould. But let them once do ſo, let all the People praiſe him, and then prove him whether he will not do thoſe great things for us: Whether he will not deal yet more bounti-

bountifully even in those things, for the sake of which People now transgress against him. *The Earth is the Lord's and the Fulness thereof*, Psal. 24. 1. *The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts*, Hag. 2. 8. so he can disclose it whensoever he will, perhaps more than hath been yet seen and talked of. *And I will give thee the Treasures of Darkness, and hidden Riches of secret Places*, Isa. 45. 3. He can shew us where are the several rich Mines, and some way bring to our Knowledge whatever Worth and Excellency lies hid at present in the Bowels of the Earth. So there may be sufficient, yea and abundance for all. And there may be such exceeding Plenty, even of the formerly beloved Mammon, that they shall even loath and not esteem it, because there is no such intrinsick Goodness in it as was supposed. And things will be as readily done without, as heretofore they were greedy and eager after it. The Nature and End of every thing relating to us shall be perfectly understood, and how they conduce to our real Good and Happiness. As things shall be fully made known which tend to the Use, Well-being and Delight of the Body; so the same will be discerned concerning the Soul. The hidden Man of the Heart will come forth, and as that even now doth clearly appear in the Sight of God, so it will be yet more manifested to our View, that we may also know what is in Man as we see his outward Face. The Thoughts of many Hearts shall be reveal-

revealed, so we may as evidently perceive them, as we behold the working of their Hands, or their goings up and down upon bodily Feet.

The Lord saith, behold, all Souls are mine, Ezek. 18. 4. He challengeth a peculiar Property in them; and yet he hath sent forth a peremptory Decree, *The Soul that sinneth it shall die.* The Soul hath a Knowledge of this which cannot be shaken off; so imprinted, that though it may be somewhat defaced, yet it cannot be worn out. The Desire and Tendency riseth up to somewhat which we see not, but yet know, believe and hear of. There is a Conscíousnes of Duty to one above, all one as the Servant hath to his Master; and as there do arise Joy and Satisfaction, when his Duty is rightly performed, so there is Regret and Condemnation when it is neglected. There must be some Thought or a stupid Forgetfulnes; and even for that there is some Imagination or secret Excuse. But if that is distrusted, as it may; for God will not allow of any Dispensation from not serving him, and there cannot be any thing more needful to a Man or Woman, than how to secure his or her own eternal Welfare: So Negligence is the certain Way to miscarry, and so sink into eternal and remediless Misery. And thereupon the Soul is stirred to arise up and be doing. She must forecast and look out how to secure her self in this most important Concern.

And when she is put upon thinking and seeking, there is one above who doth see and consider

sider all her Motions. Who offers to assist and guide her; who causes her to know the Difference between Thought and Imagination. The first apprehends a thing really as it is; but the other is hood-wink'd by Delusion and Appearance, and conceives things otherwise than they are. This imagines too much in earthly things, and too little in heavenly.

In all the Circle and Amusement of Mind, there is one who would bring us out. In all the Ignorance and Perplexity of Soul, we might at length come to Knowledge and Assurance. As we are confounded and distracted in the things below, we might lift up our Ears and hearken unto him that now speaketh from Heaven, *This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, John 17. 3. The same God who gave us a Being here, and lent us a short Time on Earth, hath prepared and ordained the other also, and told us what we may do that we may lay hold of it. All our Knowledge is to be derived from this Beginning, from the Creator who is most worthy, we may descend down to the Creatures. And because many things hinder, darken and obscure this Knowledge, we are therefore to take heed of and avoid them. *Casting down Imaginations and every high thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Oebdience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. God and Christ discerneth every Thought and Imagination as plainly

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as if they were wrote upon Tables of Stone; and when these Imaginations are brought forth and spread before the Faces of those who conceive them, they fall of themselves, and every Thought submits to the Obedience of Christ, as the former Disobedience is laid open and the Unreasonableness thereof is shewed.

What is that *high thing* which exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God? If it be truly examined it will be brought low. Can any thing be higher than the most high? Or greater than him who made and comprehendeth all things? Yet there doth lie in the Heart of Man a most absurd, strange and false Imagination, that it as it were a condescending to him to know and seek after his Maker. *The wicked through the Pride of his Countenance will not seek after God*, Psal. 10. 4. He is already high and exalted in his own Esteem, and he would not lose ought from that; but if he should once have a true Understanding and spiritual Light of God, he would *Repent and abhor himself in Dust and Ashes*, Job. 42. 5, 6. It would utterly take off from the Conceit of his own Excellency. God is most worthy of our Knowledge, so of Honour, Glory and Praise; for he hath created all things, and for his Pleasure they are and were created. Also our selves were made by him, and endued by him with Power and Capacity to know even inferiour things; and by them we should ascend up to him who is all in all. If any thing is worth knowing, he doth infinitely

infinitely exceed even in that Respect, for which such a thing is to be known. And he further contains in himself those innumerable Excellencies and Perfections, a little Part and Shadow whereof is scattered up and down in the several Creatures. The more we know God, the less we esteem of all other things; for they come so exceeding short of his exceeding Greatness and Glory that in Comparison of him they are meer Vanity and less than nothing. Indeed those who are alienated from the Life of God, who have no Sense nor Apprehension of him, may be like those in a low Dungeon, or a dark Room, where is no Beam of Light; and such may esteem the shining of a Glow-worm or the dim burning of a Candle before the Sun which they never saw. And so are all the fantastick Apprehensions or Conceits of the things before us, separated from Faith and the Knowledge of God. Then he may think himself his own, the chiefest and most lovely in the lower Creation. But if God doth once shew himself, then all those former Imaginations presently vanish away. If the natural and ungodly Man can but conceive in his Mind concerning the high and lofty one who inhabiteth Eternity. Heaven is his Throne and the Earth his Footstool, let it be asked, what was it that ever any Man fancied to be higher and greater than this? If the natural Man can but discern the Works of God, how that in Wisdom he made them all, and formed

ed alſo Man with a reaſoning and contriving Faculty, how that he eſtabliſhed that Order and Connexion of things which is throughout the World and each Part thereof. How can any Soul conclude any thing pertaining to God to be Fooliſhneſs, only becauſe himſelf doth not clearly apprehend it, when in every thing which he diſcerns ſomewhat more, there alſo he ſees great Wiſdom and Knowledge. *Shall Mortal be more wiſe than his Maker?* Who gave him and all the Generations of Mankind the Knowledge of whatever they ſeem to know. If all thoſe Thoughts of Heart and Conceits of Mind, which have been entertained and cheriſhed in the Hearts of the ſeveral Sons and Daughters of *Adam* were brought forth, as they ſhall be one Day when God ſhall evidently diſplay himſelf with the very Reality and Truth of things, they will be vaſtly different one from the other.

Out of Sion *the Perfection of Beauty, God, hath ſhined*, Pſal. 50. 2. When he makes but a ſmall Appearance of himſelf and we know but in Part, yet then he may be diſcerned to be wonderfully great and glorious, what will he be when he ſhall unfold himſelf wholly and then we ſhall know, even alſo as we are known? We ſhall know God as he now knoweth us, and we know one another. *Behold, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know than when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John 3. 2.

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ſider all her Motions. Who offers to aſſiſt and guide her; who cauſes her to know the Difference between Thought and Imagination. The firſt apprehends a thing really as it is; but the other is hood-wink'd by Deluſion and Appearance, and conceives things otherwiſe than they are. This imagines too much in earthly things, and too little in heavenly.

In all the Circle and Amuſement of Mind, there is one who would bring us out. In all the Ignorance and Perplexity of Soul, we might at length come to Knowledge and Aſſurance. As we are confounded and diſtracted in the things below, we might lift up our Ears and hearken unto him that now ſpeaketh from Heaven, *This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, John 17. 3. The ſame God who gave us a Being here, and lent us a ſhort Time on Earth, hath prepared and ordained the other alſo, and told us what we may do that we may lay hold of it. All our Knowledge is to be derived from this Beginning, from the Creator who is moſt worthy, we may deſcend down to the Creatures. And becauſe many things hinder, darken and obſcure this Knowledge, we are therefore to take heed of and avoid them. *Caſting down Imaginations and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. God and Chriſt diſcerneth every Thought and Imagination as plainly

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as if they were wrote upon Tables of Stone; and when these Imaginations are brought forth and spread before the Faces of those who conceive them, they fall of themselves, and every Thought submits to the Obedience of Christ, as the former Disobedience is laid open and the Unreasonableness thereof is shewed.

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We now hear of the Name of God, which is great, wonderful and holy: That is to the outward Ear; but then is a Conception of him in the Mind, and our Eyes are to publiſh forth his Name. We ſee with our very Eyes his Works and the things which his Hand hath made, and by the Dimenſion of them we may *aſcribe Greatneſs unto our God.* He is the ſame ſtill, who abides of old, from everlaſting to everlaſting. He is nothing the more for being publiſhed, nor yet greater for our moſt ample and large Expreſſions concerning him which poſſibly can be ſpoken. Even the holy Men of old have had diminutive and little Conceptions of him; which have increaſed yet higher according as more Revelation came into the World, as appears from the Order and Succeſſion of Scripture. They were ſurprized and amazed at the Preſence of his Angel. And what is one of them to Thouſands of Angels? Or what are they to the Lord of all which hath ten thouſand Times ten thouſand miniſtring Spirits before him. *David* ſaith, *The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods,* Pſal. 95. 3. which Gods may be the Princes of the Earth or Idols. *Jeremiah* witneſſeth, *Among all the wiſe Men of the Nations, and in all their Kingdoms, there is none like unto thee,* Jer. 10. 7. The Prophet, in *Iſa.* 40. declares ſomewhat more, and ſo doth *Daniel* in his ſeventh Chapter. And yet all theſe come exceeding ſhort of his true Majeſty and Greatneſs. It being

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such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor entred into the Heart of Man to declare God as he is. *I am that I am.* He is known to himself and by his Name, *I AM.* His only begotten Son, who is the eternal *WORD*, hath declared him: And also he did before reveal himself by his Spirit, but it was by condescending unto and helping our Infirmities: And therefore the Spirit useth such Expressions as we can receive, but withal giveth us to understand that the things of God are unutterable; for the Tongue cannot speak forth that which our finite Understandings cannot apprehend, because it is infinite and incomprehensible.

But yet so far as we know and apprehend we ought to set forth the same; to the intent that our Children may shew forth the same unto their Children, and to those which are yet unborn. And God may so enlarge their Hearts that they may receive yet further Knowledge of him; what they had from their Forefathers, may grow up yet higher. Obedience is the Follower of Knowledge. *And they that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee; for thou Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee,* Psal. 9.10. and so it is of all other Duties; and if we may rely on God as to the past, where he doth not assist much further than just to perform our Duties, and that also through Difficulty and Temptation to exercise our Trust and Dependance on him much more may we do the same as to the future, when we verily know

and are assured that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. The things prepared for those that wait for him are described to be more and greater than Eye hath seen, Ear hath heard, or hath entred into the Heart of Man, so that the greater Apprehension and more full Assurance we have of these things, we also are the more quickned and stirred up to do whatever our God requires of us in the mean while.

Saith David, *I will run the way of thy Commandments when thou shalt enlarge my Heart*, Psal. 119. 32. which denotes Freedom and Speed. *I will*, that is his own Act. *Run*, doth shut out all Delay and putting it off, for it presently begins and pursues it with Strength and Vigour. The Word *Enlarge*, doth also signifie in the Original to perswade. *God shall enlarge* (in the Margent it is *perswade*) *Japheth*, Gen. 4. 27. for the Apprehension of those great things do incline and weigh down the Mind. As before there was an high thing which did exalt it self against the Knowledge of God, which was only a wrong Imagination, but now there comes a real higher thing, which leads and invites unto his Knowledge, which is stronger and doth prevail. In the Margent of 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. It is *Reasonings* opposite to the VVord *Imaginations* in the Text: For let Men once come to this and the things of God will outreason with them. People may sit down and stop under a sudden and false Thought, or be held under Frowardness, Humour and Inconsideration

ſideration; or only examine one Side, the preſent ſeeming Pleaſure and Advantage. But if they would give their Thoughts full Scope, and ſtay a little to ſee whether Truth will come in, reflect whether in this he is not under the Command and Direction of the great Lord over all, and then conſult with his VVord and Spirit; Take in the Conſideration of future Judgment and Account, when there ſhall be an exact Retribution to every Man according to his VVorks and the Matter of this or that Day ſhall be particularly diſcuſſed. The more theſe things are underſtood and conſidered of, they preſs yet more forcibly; and what were heretofore rebellious and ſuppoſed to be in the Man's own Power, do fall and ſubmit by degrees, till every Thought is brought into Captivity unto the Obedience of Chriſt.

The Soul is firſt brought unto Obedience in the General, and then the ſame Reaſon which brings in ſome Thoughts, doth the other alſo, till the whole doth come in and yield Conformity to it. For the ſame God and Father, who is in all and above all and through all, he doth require to be loved with all the Heart, with all the Soul, with all the Strength and with all the Mind. The ſame Lord Jeſus Chriſt expects that we *obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded*, Mat. 28. 20. And ſo whether this ſhall be done preſently or hereafter, there are ſo many Conſiderations for the preſent Performance of the ſame, that whoſo ſuffers them to

be debated in his Mind, they forthwith turn the Scale against all dilatory Pleas and Excuses. For seeing we must all appear before God to give Account of our several Persons before him, let our selves judge this one thing in the mean while, whether God will not be better pleased with and sooner accept of those who make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and who do not put it off from Day to Day; or with them who trifle with and despise him in the mean time. Or whether it will not be better for them whilst Time is before them and Opportunity is present, so to employ that Opportunity in doing those things whereof is Hope and Expectation to which God hath annexed a Promise and a Reward. Or to be still running after those things whereof they are ashamed in the Act; which heighthens their Doubt and Fear of the divine Threatning and Punishment, which is established by the same Word and Truth as the other. So they are either tending towards Good, or procuring Loss and Evil to themselves.

Every one Desires good to himself and would avoid evil, Hurt and Inconveniency. As he is a Man of Understanding and Prudence to let him Judge and do according to the most likely Way to obtain the one and avoid the other. See, *I have set before thee this Day Life and Good, and Death and Evil: I call Heaven and Earth to record this Day against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing; Therefore*

Therefore chooſe Life that thou and thy Seed may live, Deut. 30. 15. VVhoever reads or hears theſe Lines, whether thou examineſt them in thy Cloſet or by a caſual View; whether this Book be read to thee by another, or few or many be preſent. To each Man or VVoman ſingly I do apply my ſelf, and I call the Angels to witneſs that theſe things be ſet home to thy Heart, that this doth not turn for a Teſtimony againſt thee, and when ſuch things were laid before thee, thou wouldſt not mind but refuſe, Thou Man or VVoman of whatever Rank or Degree, of whatever Age, State or Condition of Life, young Men or Maidens, yea and Children that can in the leaſt apprehend what I ſay, I ſpeak to you all ſeverally, and joyntly even in this very Moment of Time, in this very Inſtant, now even in the ſame Day that this is declared unto you, I ſpeak to every one of you in the Prophet's Phraſe. *BEHOLD YOUR GOD.* And I do moſt humbly and earneſtly intreat of his divine Majeſty, which he is more ready to do than I to ask him. O Lord God Almighty, behold thy Sons and Daughters, that from this Hour and Day they may take thee for the Lord their God, conſecrate themſelves entirely and univerſally unto thy Service, improving this and all their remaining Days for every Opportunity to do good, and carefully watch againſt and eſchew all Occaſions of evil. Henceforward to mind nothing but God, and the things pertaining to him,

how they may most please and be accepted with him. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Yea, blessed is he that readeth; or they that hear that they may know these VVords, and immediately without any Delay keep and observe the things written therein.

CHAP. III.

That Surmise and Imagination is spoken unto, whereby some People think that they have so grievously offended God that they dare not come unto him.

THe second Hindrance which keeps People off and was proposed to be spoken unto in the Beginning of this Book, is, that some imagine that they have so grievously offended God that they dare not come unto him.

The first Example of this we have in our Father *Adam*. *And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, where art thou? And he said, I heard thy Voice in the Garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked and I hid my self*, Gen. 3. 9, 10. A Consciousness of his Guilt and Disobedience did make him keep off, yea, and unwilling to approach unto God when he was called. Perhaps he thought that God knew not his Transgression, but would discern it by some outward Sign when he came somewhat nearer.

VVhereas

VVhereas God both saw and heard them talking under the Tree in the midst of the Garden, and did more clearly discern their Temptation and Sin than he could inquire and be informed afterwards. But he came and would examine the matter after the Manner of Men. Both to vindicate his Justice, and also to manifest that he yet continued his Grace and Familiarity to our Nature: For even in the Curse and Punishment pronounced Mercy is intermixed. A most precious Promise is conveyed into what may seem a terrible Sentence. *It shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel*, Gen. 3. 15. Thus Mercy rejoyceth against Judgment; and even overcometh it at last. And whereas it is said, *I will greatly multiply thy Sorrow and thy Conception. In Sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the Days of thy Life*, Vers. 16, 17. Here also is somewhat released of the pronounced Punishment; for God, who is sovereign, doth not execute in so severe a Degree as his VVords did seem at first to import, for though indeed there is Trouble, Pain and Sorrow in our coming into and Continuance in this VVorld; yet blessed be God, it is not altogether so continually grievous as what might have been expected when the VVords first proceeded forth. Thus is the Lord merciful and gracious, even when he is righteous and just: And as his Mercy is over all his VVorks, so it comes in as a Balm to mollifie his Vengeance. God first calls upon our sinful Parents to shew that he

had not quite cast them off, and that they should not languish under a perpetual Separation from their Maker. He finds out a Method of Reconciliation and Accommodation: Tho' withal he ordained them and us a Punishment, yet we may truly say, the Lord hath punished us less than our Iniquities do deserve. Hence we may learn and be encouraged that if we have not heretofore obeyed the Voice of his Commandment, yet still we ought to come when he calleth us; and it shall not be worse but better for us.

Thus saith the Lord, behold I frame evil against you, and devise a Device: Return ye now every one from his evil Way, and make your Ways and your Doings good. And they said, there is no Hope, but we will walk after our own Devices, and we will every one do the Imagination of his evil Heart, Jer. 18. 11, 12. When People have committed much already, their Conscience is accused of Sin; and they are sensible how that they are obnoxious to God's Wrath and Punishment; and fearing they shall one Day suffer under it, they think it the same if they suffer for much as for little, and so they fall from one Wickedness to another. Nay, with some there is a most strange and horrid Imagination, as Persecutors and such like, who conceiving an Hatred and Enmity against God, but dreading withal he will be stronger than they when they come to meet him; and therefore they take Advantage in this Time of Trial and Forbearance,

ance, as it were out of foregoing Revenge to act ſtubbornly, rebelliouſly and contemptuouſly againſt him as ever they can. It is written in the *Revelations* of thoſe who *gnawed their Tongues for Pain, and blaſphemed the God of Heaven, becauſe of their Pains and Sores, and repented not of their Deeds*, Rev. 16. 10, 11. Some again did give Glory to God for his Judgments. The firſt Sort, whilſt they were yet in the VVay, did provoke him yet more, who at length was too hard for them and hath delivered them over unto the Tormentors. Like as we have known or heard of ſome deſperate condemned Rebels, who might have their Pardon if they would ſue and make Supplication for it, but they would not through Stubbornneſs or a pretended Bravery, and therefore they did all the Miſchief they could before they died. In this Caſe the more uſual VVay is to try all Means to obtain a Reprieve or Forgiveneſs; and if that cannot poſſibly be had, then indeed the former Reſolution was the more excuſable. But if it might have been obtained unleſs for ſuch provoing Attempts, or they would uſe them of ſet Purpoſe, here it is the very Heighth of Folly and Madneſs. For they wilfully bring upon themſelves ſuch Evil and Miſery under which they ſmart, only for a ſlight and ſudden Humour which ſoon paſſeth away, and for which they are condemned by all underſtanding Men. Thus it is as concerning Offences between Man and Man: But yet

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is ten Thousand times more unreasonable as to Sins against God. For, do we provoke the Lord to Jealousie? Are we stronger than he? If any are perversly resolved against him, they will see and feel, who will repent of it first, God or themselves. *The Lord will not spare him, but then the Anger of the Lord and his Jealousie shall smoak against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven*, Deut. 29. 20. All this may be done at this present time, even when he knows not or is not sensible thereof. But now it would be better if he were sensible of as much, because then he might fear and tremble, submit, and then endeavour to be reconciled unto him; in the mean while, *Lay hold of his Strength and make Peace with him, who saith, Fury is not in me*, Isa. 27. 4. But if this be neglected, what will the poor Creature do when the Anger and Jealousie of the Lord which before did smoak to give VVarning, shall burn out with fiery Indignation to consume the Adversaries when all the Curses that are written in this Book, and now lie against him shall be actually executed upon him.

For behold the Day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and all the Proud (such as will not submit in the mean while) yea, *and all that do wickedly shall be Stubble, and the Day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall not leave them Root nor Branch*, Mal. 4. 1.

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Let them at present be never so great in their own Opinion or many for Number: Yet when the Earth and all the Works thereof shall be burnt up, they shall be likewise devoured in the general Conflagration. What is a single Potsherd to stand before him when he shall sweep away with one Beesome of Destruction all the Generations of the wicked since the World began? *Thou carriest them away as with a Flood, they are as asleep*, Psal. 40. 5. Thus we evidently perceive of those Generations, whereof one cometh, another goeth, and the single Persons flourish and grow up again. They are cut down at any Time, or wither. And in the mean time, *By thy Wrath are we troubled*, Vers. 7. It is now revealed from Heaven. We now and then perceive some Glimpses thereof, and we do startle and fear. Those who are farthest off and most exempted from this Wrath, yet they commonly have most Thought and Apprehension thereof. As again, to whom it is most due and threatned by reason of their evil Deeds, they do what they can to shut out the Sense and Knowledge thereof. For otherwise it would press in so hard and close upon them that then they must not continue in Sin.

Even in those who fence and harden themselves most, yet ever and anon a sudden Flash of divine Vengeance darts into their Minds, which strikes them with Dread and Horror, and by the trembling and Astonishment it gives, it doth sufficiently convince, there is

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one mightier than they. Our God indeed now keeps Silence, and is out of Sight, as also he forbears in this Time of Tryal, yet he hath declared and made known, that he is *angry with the wicked every Day*, Psal. 7.11. who again Day by Day transgress against him: For they speak and do those things against God, which they dare not do against their fellow-Creature. But when Man hath finished his Time of sinning, the Number of the Days of Transgression are accomplished, and God comes to reckon for them altogether. *For the Destruction of the Transgressors and of the Sinners shall be together*, Isa. 1.28. Then whatever he thought or did as concerning this almighty Judge, when the things concerning him have an End, then the most mad and prophane Wretch that ever trod on the Earth, will be forced to take up *Julian's* Confession and Acknowledgment, *Vicisti Galilee*, and in another Sense then the Prophet spake in. *O Lord, thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed*, Jer. 20. 7. Why thus much may be clearly discerned in the mean while, for let Man consider himself, or who made him; his Flesh is as Grass which grows up towards withering: His Breath is in his Nostrils, and who breathed it in, he can take it out whensoever he will. His Strength is confined to such a Degree, beyond which he cannot do more: His Stature, bodily Dimension, and every thing he hath is limited to such a Size. And certainly he who hath determined him

him on every Side, hath Power over him. Who made all Men, he can do more to such a single Person, than one Man or Thousands can do to another. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. As he *doth good*, so he can punish: He can do both in a greater Degree and more eminent Manner, than any of the Sons of Men can do one to another. Even to the utmost that we are capable to receive and to endure, *For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts*, Isa. 55. 9. This is brought in to confirm his Promise of Pardon and Acceptation, Vers. 7. So again is his Punishment and Requital. He can contend and be wroth so long, even just till the Spirits shall fail before him, and the Souls which he hath made. Which also he can uphold and continue yet longer to sustain his Vengeance, as long as himself is pleased to inflict the same. *His Loving Kindness is better than Life*, for it extends yet further; so likewise the Power of his Anger is more to be dreaded than Death, for it is even beyond that. Upon all Respects God's Displeasure and Punishment doth exceed Man's Displeasure and Punishment, and consequently it is more to be feared and more Care ought to be taken that it be avoided.

The several Actings and Obligations towards God rise greater and higher than to the best and greatest of Men, for God is more than all.

So

So neither is that Rebellion and Contempt to be uſed towards him, which Men will not admit of from one another. God is greater than Man: Yea, all Nations before him are as the Drop of the Bucket. *He will keep the Feet of his Saints, and the wicked ſhall be ſilent in Darkneſs, for by Strength ſhall no Man prevail. The Adverſaries of the Lord ſhall be broken in Pieces,* 1 Sam. 2. 8. Strength may ſometimes prevail againſt the Son of Man who is weak as we are, but yet many times, a wiſe Submiſſion will do more. But neither Strength nor yet further Provocation ſhall in the leaſt prevail againſt God, when true Repentance will always avail and ſtand in ſtead. Remarkable is that Counſel of our Lord and Saviour, *And I ſay unto you my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear, fear him which after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell, yea I ſay unto you fear him,* Luke 12. 4, 5. The utmoſt of Mens Malice and Cruelty extends only to this ſhort Time and to this weak Fleſh, and they uſe it accordingly in this their Hour and Power of Darkneſs. Whereas God ſuffers, *Acts* 13. 18. Mens evil Deeds here in the Body, but when they are diſlodged from that he calls them to Judgment and Account, and he hath the Length of a whole Eternity, for to inflict Vengeance both on Body and Soul for the ſame. Even here we perceive that at the firſt time of ſuffering or when it is

ſhort

ſhort, Men may bear up and not ſink under it; but it is not ſo of a long and continued Miſery. But what our God hath threatned is ſuch that if the wicked were Braſs and Iron it would make them ſubmit and yield, much more will it Fleſh and Bone. *Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be ſtrong in the Days that I ſhall deal with thee? I the Lord have ſpoken it and I will do it*, Ezek. 22. 14. There is none who doth not ſometimes labour under Sorrow and Vexation of Thought, much more muſt they groan under the Worm which ſhall never die, and they can no way be freed from the Senſe and Feeling thereof.

Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee, the Remainder of Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain, Pſal. 76. 10. God firſt endued him with Power to rage and to be furious to that Degree he now is; and as before he did not ordain it further, ſo even now he can curb what he hath made. He will ſhorten and make it quite to ceaſe. When their Rage is againſt him, he will put an Hook in their Jaws, and lead them till they ſhall torment, even till they ſhall quite weary themſelves. There is no good to be done that way. Hear then what the Pſalmiſt ſaith next, *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God: Let all that be round about him bring Preſents unto him that ought to be feared*, Verſ. 11. Submit and be obedient unto him, have a good Mind and ſhew all the good will towards him which you can, now you are a little while in the Way. Draw near and

be

be reconciled ye who were sometimes afar off, and averse towards him. Let all that former Aversation be done away and come to the Throne of Grace with Reverence and Godly Feat. *Look diligently lest any Root of Bitterness springing up trouble you:* Lest there be any Remainder of that which was heretofore in you. Cut it off Root and Branch; for it doth wholly spring up from your Sin and Ignorance.

God is good and the same still from everlasting to everlasting: Neither doth he alter or change with our several Apprehensions or Assertions concerning him. But by our Sin and Iniquity we made him our Enemy: The Consciousness whereof did raise a slavish Fear and Dread. The less we did know of him, the less we did discover of his Goodness and Love towards the Children of Men: As again the more we know of him, the more that doth appear forth unto us. When we seek diligently and come yet more near unto God, we do as really perceive Goodness, Mercy, Love, Peace and Joy to flow from him, all one as Vertue did proceed forth from the Garment of Christ, and all one as we perceive the Heat of the Fire when we make towards it, or when we go abroad in a bright shining Day to see the Light of the Sun.

If Man were verily perswaded of thus much at first, he would never depart and go astray from his Maker; as when he is truly informed and throughly satisfied hereof. He would instantly

ly return unto him. For who is he that desires not Good and Happiness, and would not willingly at first go the ready way to it? Indeed with the shew and appearance thereof he is presently turned aside to transgression, and the pleasures of Sin. But then it is not long before he finds by sensible experience, the vanity and vexation thereof at present; and he is further forewarned of Destruction and Misery. And then he may alter his steps into the way of Peace and Comfort, which leads unto, and ends in Glory and Happiness. We may taste and see that the Lord is gracious; for we do evidently feel and behold with our Eyes, that thus it is now at this present time, as to what he doth require of us, and as to what he hath forbidden. And so his promises and threatnings of what are further consequent to the same, are confirmed by the Word and Oath of him for whom it is impossible to lie.

Those who are enlightened, do clearly discern all this; and they who come to true Repentance, when they have set aside all prejudice and carnality, and are throughly separated from the perversities of the Spirit; When they *come to themselves*, Luke 15. 17. and are such as Men should be, They do likewise judge that it is so as here spoken of; for it is evident to their real Sense and Disposition. Who have experience both of the Way of the Lord, and also of the Way of Sin and Satan, They do affirm that the first is better. The Temptati-

on wherewith Men are drawn over to Irreligion and Ungodliness, is, that it hath a shew of Liberty and Briskness: As again, to such the knowledge and fear of the Lord doth seem a confinement and dulness, and therefore they refuse and cast it off. But this is a most grievous Sin and Provocation to turn *Rebel against their God.* It is monstrous and unnatural to forget God that formed them and all things. It is most detestable impiety, and the utmost ill-deserving, to live in no sense of, and subjection unto the Governour of the World. This is infinitely worse, and more inexcusable than for Subjects to rise up in Arms against a good and lawful Prince; for Children to be Rebellious and Froward to a kind, good, just and wise Father; or as is any Action of the most ungrateful Servant against the best of Masters. Yet all this proceeds from want of a right knewledge of God, and of a true Understanding what his Fear is. I speak this to shew the Shame and Degeneracy of Mankind. Even those must have their Thoughts altered concerning God and lifted up towards him; or he will *raise them up to Shame and everlasting Contempt*, and cast them into a bottomless Pit to suffer the Vegeance of eternal Fire. In God is first contained, and from him is derived every good and perfect thing; even what is enjoyed, or can be further desired by the Sons of Men.

O Lord, the Hope of Israel, *all that forsake thee shall*

be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the Earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters, Jer. 17. 13. God sendeth Rain upon the just and the unjust, He giveth common Mercies promiscuously and indifferently to all, but there is somewhat more and greater in being the Hope of *Israel*. Somewhat is hidden and reserved there only for those who come unto him; as again, who forsake him miss thereof. And when this shall be opened and actually given, then Shame, Vexation and Anguish will possess those who by their former demerits and provocation have lost their share and portion in this matter. *They that depart from me shall be written in the Earth.* When they have left and gone aside from him above, they must cleave unto and pursue after somewhat. And they cannot follow after any thing, but what is in this place where they live. And seeing they have chosen the Earth, either the Men or Things therein, let them make the most thereof. But what will they do when the Earth and all the Works thereof shall be burnt up? When themselves and others who inhabit here shall die. And if they thought themselves well enough, because tho' the things herein are perishing, yet themselves are perishing likewise, and they serve for their Time, Nevertheless they must remain elsewhere, for they have immortal Souls and returning Bodies. And what shall they do throughout the Length and Space of Eternity, when

all the things wherein they before truſted, are utterly gone and removed from them. Even *the Men of this World, which have their Portion in this Life*, Pſal. 17. 14. might thus know and conclude, As they thought it worth their while to ſecure this Place and Time, who were for getting the beſt and fatteſt things that they might live happily and comfortably, who were for the greateſt and wiſeſt Company in the whole Country of their Abode, they might have looked up and have learned to be acquainted with thee, *O King of Nations; for as much as among all the wiſe Men of the Earth, and in all their Kingdoms there is none like unto thee.* They might underſtand and ſeek after the Lord, whoſe is not only the Earth but the whole World and all that is therein; for he *made Heaven and Earth and all things. Who whilſt they lived, did bleſs their own Soul*, Pſal. 49. 18. did ſo hug themſelves with the Comforts and Conveniencies of this ſhort Time, they might much more hope for and endeavour after the good things of Eternity, and take a more diligent and greater Care how themſelves might live bleſſed for ever. They might have further truſted unto him, who (as they experimentally found) *did good, giving them Rain from Heaven, filling their Souls, with Food and Gladneſs: So the Lord will perfect that wich concerneth them*, Pſal. 138. 8. Thoſe periſhing and fading Comforts were an Earneſt and Aſſurance that he would give the true and enduring Happineſs for ſuch who ſhould

ſhould endeavour to be found worthy for to receive the ſame. *If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your Truſt the true Riches,* Luke 16. 11. As he provided them with the meat which periſheth, which was had by Labour, Dreſſing, and other forgoing Means, and that did preſerve Health and Life for the Time, ſo likewiſe he afforded the Meat which endureth unto everlaſting Life, which alſo was to be had by uſing ſuch Means of Grace. And as many as did receive and comply with the Workings of that Grace, they ſhall be crowned and actually inveſted with the other to which it did tend and grow up.

As he is the God of the Earth, ſo of the Heavens alſo. And as he hath determined our Dwelling and Abode here for a Space, ſo he will take us up unto the Heavens for evermore. Here we have no continuing City, but now we deſire that which would continue, and that muſt be an heavenly. *Wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a City,* Heb. 11. 16. which like himſelf muſt remain for ever. He took us out of our Mothers Womb, and doth hold us up from the Cradle unto the Grave. In the mean while he reneweth his Mercies and Preſervation every Morning, and there is ſtill ſomething more than all this. *Bleſſed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with Benefits, even the God of our Salvation. He that is our God is the God of Salvation,*

and unto God the Lord belong the Issues from Death, Psal. 68. 19, 20. In that Word *Salvation* is comprised more than can be possibly had in this World. *Salvation* imports to be free from all Evil, Fear and Danger, which none is in this World. For, consider of those who are in the most safe Condition, and think themselves so, yet the last Enemy waits for them, which is *Death*, and thence is Fear and Doubt. But we have Assurance from our God, who brought us into Being, who carrieth us thro' here, who is Lord of Life, and hath Power over Death, that he will give a Rising and Deliverance from that. Now we have the most doubtful Apprehensions concerning Death and the future State. For though on this Earth we are encompassed about with Fear, Pit and the Snare, yet we know what is the utmost of things here, and what usually happens unto others: So we are contented and freed from Terror and Amazement. But further on, if we did consider rightly, we have more Hope and Security from the *Lord being our Hope*, and the God of our Salvation. And there he declares beforehand, that neither he nor we shall be ashamed. For hereby he will do more for us than we can ask or conceive, and we shall find it to be infinitely more than we could expect, and which will make an abundant Compensation for whatever Difficulty, Loss or Trouble we did sustain in coming to be Partaker thereof. And though our God shall *cause us*

to inherit high Places, Isa. 58. 12. yet we shall not be in the least Danger or Suspicion of falling. *Thou shalt be far from Terror, for it shall not come near thee*, Isa. 54. 11. We shall be more strongly secured from every Evil or Misery, and be wholly exempt from the Thought and Apprehension thereof, as we shall be let into the Possession and Enjoyment of all Good and Excellency, so the Continuance thereof to everlasting, that we shall never lose nor be deprived of it, will be made so sure and ratified unto us, as they are certain of that Moment wherein they have it; or as we are at present sensible that we live and breath, or that we have what we grasp at this Instant. It will be a much stronger Assurance than any had of the House which he called by his own Name, and continued in his Family for most Generations. Here our Bodies are dying, the Timber and Walls do waste and decay, but as we now perceive this, so there will be the same Certainty, that the House in the Heavens is eternal and will never sink, for the Lord will be its Support and keep it as long as himself is God, which is for ever and ever. *But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no End.*

This may seem strange and new Doctrine to those who were not particularly told of it before, or did not believe, or did not throughly consider, but it will be evidently set before our Eyes. We shall as clearly know, perceive and be throughly made sensible thereof as of

the Life we now live, and of things wherein at preſent we are concerned and acquainted with. We ſhall be equally, yea, and much more affected with them as of the things whereof the Men of this World take moſt Thought and Care. Even they who heretofore were ſo careleſs and indifferent as to heavenly and ſpiritual things, yet when they ſhall come to diſcern how nearly they did belong to them, and of how much greater Moment they were even as to immediately relate unto their own ſelves, their eternal Happineſs or Miſery, Then will ſucceed the utmoſt Indignation and Anguiſh for their former Neglect or Refuſal. And there will be the moſt earneſt coveting, yea and ſeeking even unto Tears for to partake thereof. They ſhall know and ſee that *it is an evil thing and bitter that thou haſt forſaken the Lord, and that my Fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts*, Jer. 2. 19. They were alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance and Blindneſs that was in them. They did not conceive what God was, though his viſible and ſtanding Works were a continual Witneſs before them. And further, they might have ſought and read out of his Book, and have looked into their own Souls which were made in his Image; and therefore from within her ſelf ſhe could have ſome Apprehenſion of her Maker. Indeed God hideth himſelf in all theſe, but yet he might be ſomewhat found out by thoſe who would ſeek and feel after him; but when himſelf ſhall

appear

appear openly and fully discover himself in his true Nature, then those shall be strangly incensed and confounded, who heretofore would not receive the Knowledge of him thro' Prejudice and strange Imaginations: For then we would never have carried our selves after such a Manner towards him: We would have sought diligently and enquired after God, and we would have liked to have retained him in our Knowledge. We would have chosen his Fear if we had then apprehended, It was all really so, as now we see and are fully convinced it is. Why of this you were or might have been truly informed in the Beginning.

Though in the State of Absence and Darkness we could not behold God clearly as he was, yet when *the King was afar off*, we could perceive so much of his Beauty that we could conclude it to be certainly real and much more than what we did at that Time see. For we had then those manifest Glimpses of his Greatness and Glory that we might be most fully satisfied that all was so, which did pertain to him. Like as we have heard so have we seen, and infinitely much more; for not the one Half, nor yet the thousandth Part was told us. All things are better and greater than the most knowing Saint did believe, yea more than the Prophets themselves who searched diligently and enquired after these things, could apprehend. As we believe, so have we spoken. We now act and Labour if we may attain to them,

so

ſo then they will be found much exceeding our utmoſt Knowledge and Labour. Now it is in our ſearching after underſtanding and ſeeking the Knowledge of God as in travelling from one Place to another, or in new Roads, there doth every now and then open a freſh and further Proſpect. We paſs over new Ground, and we find ſomething more to confirm us in the Judgment we had before of this good Land. So if we ſeek for God in his Works, Word, Grace and inward Manifeſtation, he appears to be moſt great, true, good and gracious, worthy to be known and received. Indeed we cannot by ſearching find out the Almighty to Perfection, becauſe of that weak, frail, dark and imperfect State we are are now in: We ſhall know more in the firſt Minute after we are diſlodged from this Tabernacle than we could attain unto by Prayer, diligent ſeeking and by intenſe thinking all our Life-time before. But ſeeing that God hath now allotted us ſuch a Space on Earth, to *underſtand and ſeek after him*, Pſal. 14. 2. that we may be careful all along to perform exactly the ſame, and in ſuch manner as near as we can attain, which implies an actual Endeavour to do it, even ſo as God doth require it of us. *The Deſire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee*, Iſa. 26. 8. So the End and Intention of all our Thoughts, Words and Actions is to be unto his Glory, and to have them ruled and ſquared by his Word. It is

evident

evident that when Men are as they ſhould be, that is, freed in good Meaſure from Sin and Ignorance, the very Deſire of their Soul riſeth and makes towards God. Which is a moſt ſure and certain Token that he is good and agreeable to our Nature, for elſe he could not be deſired by us. There is indeed a Conſciouſneſs of Imperfection and Abſence, ſomewhat more we would have, and to ſomewhat more we would be yet more nearly united. Now God will make up all this to every one of us. He will ſatisfie and repleniſh to the utmoſt (brimfull and running over) every Deſire. He will triumph and reign before his Saints gloriouſly. For though they did come ſhort of what was expected and required from them, yet God conſidereth they were but Duſt which paſſeth away and cometh not again. Such Occaſions did ſuddenly paſs by and not return again. They were amidſt Temptations and Hindrances, by which they were overtaken and kept off; ſo our God will reſtore ſuch and ſupply what was wanting. Yet himſelf is God and not Man. He lies under no Diſadvantages but will perform every Part of his Covenant to the utmoſt, that it ſhall be returned to our ſelves with incredible Gladneſs and Rejoycing, *Lo, this is the Lord we have waited for.*

Truly God is good to Iſrael, *even to ſuch as are of a clean Heart*, Pſal. 73. 1. Thoſe Promiſes and gracious Expreſſions in Scripture, and what the Holy Ghoſt ſaith concerning God, they are penned

penned in a modeſt and leſs Degree, that even the thing may exceed what we were told of; that what was in a little Meaſure reported of, might be found marvellous and extraordinary. So it will be of all things contained in that Book which we are now required to believe, and they are much beyond what Words do expreſs of them. Here it is ſaid ſimply, *God is good to* Iſrael. A plain Aſſertion, but himſelf will manifeſt and ſhew particularly, that he is tranſcendently good to his People, both as to what he doth for them at preſent, and what he hath further provided for them. Even what the World are apt to eſteem leſs, I mean thoſe ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in Chriſt Jeſus, which are in Preparation and Order to thoſe great things to come. The ſenſual Man doth taſt and perceive how ſweet and deſirable it is to gratifie the Fleſh which hinders from diſcerning the things of the Spirit. But he that is ſpiritual doth exceedingly reliſh the Knowledg and Meditation of the moſt high; and he doth more eſteem of the Light of God's Countenance and the Gladneſs which he puts into the Hearts of his People, than what ariſes from the full Enjoyment of Corn and Wine. In a more eſpecial manner, *God is good to ſuch as are of a clean Heart*, that is, when it is cleanſed from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, when it is freed from *Sin* and *Ignorance*, when it comes out *from among the Pots*, Pſal. 68. 13. when it is lifted up from the Earth, and diſintangled from

from the Affairs of this Life, then it doth alſo clearly know and perceive the Goodneſs and Loving Kindneſs of the Lord. Thoſe, who were heretofore alienated through wicked Works come to be acquainted with God when once ſuch wicked Works are truly repented of and forſaken. Who were by reaſon of them ſlaviſhly afraid, but when once they are aſſured of actual Forgiveneſs and Pardon, then they are in Peace. Who were kept off by wrong and falſe Apprehenſions and Prejudices, when they know him truly and certainly, they find nothing but Lovelineſs and Excellency in him. If they ever came to Repentance, they will be really ſenſible and actually perſwaded of thus much at laſt. But why will they not ſuffer themſelves to know and be aſſured of thus much at firſt? What need of *departing away from our God*, Iſa. 59. 13. when we might abide well with him all the mean while; and if we go away we muſt return again, or be eternally miſerable. Why ſhould we provoke or make him our Enemy, when there is no need of it at all? Is he worthy to be ſought unto at laſt and not at firſt alſo? Though many go aſtray and return, there may be indeed more Joy and Welcom at firſt, yet it will be better with thoſe who continually ſerve God, *Neither tranſgreſs they at any Time his Commandment*, or in as few Inſtances as poſſible. *Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine*, Luk. 15. 31. The whole and continued Current of God's Favour is upon theſe.

God

God will proportion his Reward according to Mens Deeds: *For the Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he will reward every Man according to his Work*, Mat. 16. 27. The Labourers in *Mat.* 20. came all as ſoon as they were called. Neither did they ſtand idle a Moment longer, and ſo they received equal with thoſe who bore the Burden and Heat of the Day. But in this Chriſtian Nation none have that Excuſe of not being called or hired. For every one in every Place may come to the Knowledge and Service of God as ſoon as they will. It is unnatural to be unmindful of the Rock that begat thee, and to forget God that formed thee; eſpecially when we more lately ſprung up from him, and the Senſe of him was freſh and perceptible in our tender Years and his new Workmanſhip. So we conclude that it is moſt acceptable to retain and increaſe that Knowledge which we had from the beginning; to remember and abide continually by the Root from which we ſpring; to be ever mindful that we are Plants of our heavenly Father's planting; to be Branches of his Vine, to be purged by him, and be growing up in him, till we bring forth Fruit; to derive our Sap and Fatneſs from him, and as we partake thereof from him, ſo to be glad and rejoyce therein, to *hear of the loving Kindneſs of the Lord early in the Morning*, my Soul ſhall make her Boaſt thereof and be glad. To recount youthly Experiences of divine Favour wherein

wherein is to be had more real and lasting Satisfaction than in all the Vanity and Folly of our first Years. How sweet is it to recollect, *Through thee I have been holden up ever since I was born. Thou art he that took me out of my Mother's Womb. My Praise shall continually be of thee, and so it hath ever since my Tongue could speak* plain, or I did conceive the Words which I uttered forth. Thou art he with whom I have been acquainted in the Days of old. That is no Confinement, whose Heart is enlarged, and whose Understanding opened to conceive of the great things of God and Eternity: Whilst others thought of hungry and insipid Recreations, or the short and empty Delights of Sin. His Body was at Liberty to go here and there, but kept off from what would occasion Weariness and hasten Destruction. He did glorifie his God thereby and not make it an Instrument of Sin unto Iniquity. He did preserve it in due Health, Strength and Sobriety, by declining those things which naturally bring on Weakness and Diseases: And then, by living under the continued Sense and Apprehension of a good God, He is just so as a reasonable Creature should be, for he can rejoyce in the God of his Salvation. Be thankful and take Comfort in the things before him. Men may live with the same Content and Freedom under his Government, as Subjects under a lawful and an excellent Prince, and Children under a good and loving Father.

God

God is infinitely and eſſentially good, and alſo loving to Mankind; for he doth actually communicate forth his Benefits unto them. That he is ſo in his own Nature none can deny, nor have the leaſt Doubt. But is he ſo as pertaining to us? Why we taſte and find it ſo. The more any one partakes of the divine Nature and Approaches unto his Likeneſs, he is carried out with the more earneſt Deſire of doing good to his Brethren and Fellow-Creatures; and he actually doth the ſame according to the Power and Opportunity put into his Hands. Now this is a manifeſt Token of the infinite Goodneſs of the Godhead, becauſe he hath put ſuch a Spirit and Mind into his Servants to do the very ſame. His Goodneſs doth as much exceed that of the greateſt Saint on Earth, or of that Perſon who was ever moſt beneficial unto the World, as the whole Sea doth exceed a ſingle Drop. 'Tis God, who doth manifeſt and ſhew forth one Ray of his Goodneſs and Truth through ſuch an individual Creature, and cauſe him to do whatever he doth. Here we are in the Dominion of the Prince of the Power of the Air, even *where Satan's Seat is*; and he doth hinder, or reſiſt, or defeat all the Good he can. His Devices are ſubtle, and his Inſtruments many; ſo he is the Cauſe of all the Evil and Miſery which are ſcattered up and down in the Earth. God ſuffers it to be thus for our Trial and other wiſe Reaſons, that by our overcoming he may have the greater Glo-

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ry. But because of this many are apt to doubt of God's Love to the World. Whereas by this means he doth prove the Children of Men towards him: For by their being amidst Temptation and evil, the Trial of their Faith may be had whether they will follow the thing that good is. Whether they will still resolutely put forth and countermine the Devices of the Enemy, and so make them of none effect, or cause him to fall, and that he shall lose more than he got thereby. God suffers many things to come to pass for our Trial (whereof we are apt to stagger concerning his Love and Goodness to Mankind) but thereby he hath shewed how they may approve themselves more than Conquerors, and then he designs to crown them with greater Glory and Happiness. This may be applied to the particular and several Dispensations which happen of whatever Kind they be, each may be observed by a discerning Person to exercise our Faith and Trust. *Now for a Season (if need be) ye are in Heavineſs thro' manifold Temptations, that the Trial of your Faith being more precious than of Gold that perisheth might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. It is irksome at present, and we are apt to have hard and distrustful Thoughts, but this is because we know not all the Reasons thereof, and how our End shall be yet more excellent and happy. *Who led thee through that great and terrible Wilderness, wherein were fiery Serpents and Scorpions*

and Drought, where there was no Water. Who brought thee forth Water out of the Rock of Flint. who fed thee in the Wilderness with Manna which they Fathers knew not that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter End, Deut. 8.15,16. This will be really found though it be hid from some, and they are not sensible thereof all along. Indeed this makes the rejoycing more at the End because it happens better than was expected; but yet to know thereof beforehand makes that we *fail not nor be discouraged*, Isa. 42. 5. That we do not grow weary nor faint in our Mind, nor abate one Tittle of our Duty, nor yet desist waiting on the Lord; not to be tempted so as to say with that profane King, *This Evil is from the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer*, 2 Kings 6. 33. but rather to make the contrary and right Conclusion, This Trouble, Opposition and Resistance is from Satan the Adversary, I will endeavour through God's Grace to resist him more vigorously until he is bruised down under my Feet.

Thou shalt tread upon the Lion and Adder; the young Lion and the Dragon shalt thou trample under Feet: because he hath set his Love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high because he hath known my Name. He shall call upon me and I will answer him. I will be with him in Trouble, I will deliver him and honour him, Psal. 91. 14, 15, 16. As long as any one is in God's Way, he is safe to carry him through

through all Difficulty and Danger, that he may overcome and be crowned at the laſt. It is ſaid before, *He ſhall give his Angels Charge over thee to keep thee in all thy Ways*, Pſal. 91. 11. This Promiſe is exceeding particular, and even ſo is the whole Pſalm, for Safety and Preſervation over and from the ſeveral and ſucceſſive Kinds of Evil there mentioned: So that we may truſt and conclude that by what God hath done hitherto, he will go on to eſtabliſh and finiſh the ſame. *Caſt not away therefore your Confidence which hath great Recompence of Reward*, Heb. 11. 35. It is not an haſty nor a fond Preſumption, nor yet a vain Conceit: for it relies upon the whole Truth and Authority of God's Word: which alſo ſpeaks of the Evils and Hardſhips which we meet with in the mean while, which we find to be ſo. That ſame Word doth alſo aſſure us of Strength to bear and go through with, and at laſt of perfect Deliverance and Victory out of them. This is the Favour which the Lord beareth unto his People, until he doth actually viſit them with his Salvation, *Pſal.* 106. 4.

But for thoſe who have ſinned with their Fathers, who have committed Iniquity and done wickedly, how is it with them? Will not the following Verſe give them a Glimpſe of Hope and Comfort? *Our Fathers underſtood not thy Wonders in* Egypt, *they remembred not the Multitude of thy Mercies, but provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red Sea*, Pſal. 106. 7. If the Queſtion

ſhould be asked, wherefore do all Mankind ſin and tranſgreſs againſt the Lord? Have they not a preſent Temptation and Deſire of ſeeming Good which they imagine God would hinder them of: Not knowing that God hath provided greater Pleaſure and Happineſs for them, and more Peace and Comfort in the mean while. They are ignorant of this, for otherwiſe they would receive the Good that exceedeth: They do not underſtand the greater Multitude of God's Mercies, for then they would not behave themſelves rebelliouſly and contemptuouſly towards him. Like Words unto thoſe of *Peter* in *Acts* 3. 17, 18. may be applied to Mankind of paſt Generations, *And now Brethren, I wot that through Ignorance ye ſinned thus, as did alſo your Father* Adam. A preſent deſire of pleaſure and greatneſs led him into the Tranſgreſſion, and ſo his Sons and Daughters ever ſince have had ſome ſeeming Reaſon why they committed Sin againſt God. To be advanced a little more and better from their preſent imperfect State. Now were they aſſured that what God would do for them, would be beyond all this, then they would endeavour to continue ſtedfaſt in his Covenant. Were they fully aſcertained that they ſhould have greater Good by keeping his Judgments at all times than by declining from or walking contrary unto them, either they would not tranſgreſs at all, or in fewer Inſtances than now they have done.

God

God knoweth all things. As he ſuffers, ſo he doth likewiſe behold the whole courſe of ſinning ever ſince he created Man upon the Earth until this day, with the ſeveral Temptations, Excuſes, Circumſtances belonging to it; as alſo to what degree of Extenuation or Provocation it might have, and alſo the meaſure of Ignorance and Imperfection. He doth not need to be informed thereof, for He likewiſe diſcerns that *Willing Ignorance*, that contempt and refuſal of Inſtruction of ſet purpoſe. *The way of the juſt is uprightneſs, Thou moſt upright doſt weigh the path of the juſt.* Iſa. 26. 7. In like manner he doth conſider all the ways of the wicked, and takes in what meaſure of abomination and evil deſerving is therein; and alſo, how much is to be allowed unto Satan's Temptation.

Now the Serpent was more ſubtle than any Beaſt of the Field which the Lord God had made. *Gen.* 3. 1. And ſo he continues ſtill to be more cunning than the children of *Eve*, as they are merely ſuch without the aſſiſtances of the Grace and Spirit of God from above, and he befools them. Now again, they might from the Wiſdom and Word of God know his devices, and ſo eſcape, yea, and fruſtrate them. The Lord looketh down from Heaven upon the children of Men, he conſidereth all their ways, and underſtandeth all their works, whither good or evil, with whatſoever doth belong to them, to reward, par-

don or punish: He now sits above, and takes notice of them in order as they are done. But he hath reserved to himself the Power, and appointed a Day to Judge of all, and to distribute unto every one according to his works. This is the alone Prerogative of God above, which he hath kept in his own power: For he alone searcheth the heart, and knoweth all things; whereas we do only perceive a little in a false and imperfect manner by doubtful report and mistaken observation. And then we cannot throughly apprehend a thing wherein many are concerned; so that we can give no perfect Judgment and Determination. But the Lord will rehearse it when he writeth up his people. He hath a Book of all Nations, Families and single Persons, with the account of time and place they stood here on the Earth: as also, he notes the things that they have done.

The Scripture makes frequent mention of this particular summing up of our deeds, and that our God doth take regard of them, and will bring every secret thing into Judgment, even the most hidden passages of our Life. *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance*, Psal. 90. 8. Each single one; for why not one as well as another? nay, every wrong thing and turning aside, even our errors and misdeeds, which we pass over for Inadvertencies and small Neglects; those which we suddenly act, and do

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not much mind our ſelves. Thus much is ſignified from what is written, *Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults: Keep back thy ſervant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, let them not have dominion over me; Then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great tranſgreſſion*, Pſal. 19. 12, 13. Here the ſeveral degrees and diverſities of ſin are ſpecified, by the words *Errors*, *ſecret Faults*, *preſumptuous Sins*, and the *great Tranſgreſſion*. A conſciouſneſs that God doth even now ſearch us, and is acquainted with all our ways; and then that we muſt paſs into a ſtrict Examination and Judgment is apt to raiſe doubtful and deſpairing thoughts in our mind. How ſtrange is it that any People ſhould be heedleſs and unconcerned about thoſe things whereof they muſt be called to an account. *If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt mark iniquities, O Lord, who might ſtand?* And he might do ſo if he pleaſed; but then in his ſight no man living will be juſtified. For no man hath been ſo watchful, circumſpect, and inoffenſive in his Life and Converſation, but hath in ſeveral inſtances tranſgreſſed againſt, or deſpiſed the Lord his God: and as himſelf hath regret and vexation afterwards as he looks back, ſo he would tremble to have them ſet in order before him.

By thy wrath are we troubled. Pſal. 90. 7. And again we are comforted, (bleſſed be his Divine Majeſty,) becauſe that ſame word

which speaks of God's Displeasure and Indignation against Sin, doth likewise assure us of his Reconciliation and Pardon. Thereby is to be seen a mixture of his Justice and Mercy. And it is observable, That where are expressions even to terrifie and cast down, there is somewhat close by said to give hope and comfort, and to lift up again; where is Reproof and Threatning, there either commonly goes before, or succeeds presently after, an invitation to return, and a promise of forgiveness. So we have the very same assurance and certainty that God is to be Reconciled unto the World through Jesus Christ, either to the multitude in general, or to single persons; For God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be saved. And he came not to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance. This is as evident and clear, as that God was ever angry with the World, or with any single Man for his sin and wickedness.

But this withal is to be considered, That if the World will be saved in and through Jesus Christ, they must in the mean while submit to his Scepter and Kingdom, obey his Laws, and observe his Sayings. For as heretofore they have not gave heed unto, nor been governed by them, which hath occasioned his Wrath and *sore Displeasure*, Psal. 2. 5. so to avoid that, and obtain his mercy and favour, they

they must now do what heretofore they left undone, and ought to have done, and refrain from what they were forbidden, and yet heretofore they did. Leave off all manner of Transgression and Disobedience, and henceforward perform all Duty and Service. *Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Psal. 2. 12. Submit, and be reconciled unto him, lest you miss of that Path of Life which he leads in. He knows if you despise him, and you must take him for a Guide and Saviour to follow him whether soever he goeth. *For ye were as Sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls.* 1 Pet. 2. 25. Without this actual Returning and Amendment, there is no Salvation and Mercy.

If men will not do what is first required, it is vain to talk of, or hope for Pardon and Forgiveness; if they will not perform the necessary foregoing Conditions and Qualifications, they have no lot nor share in this matter; not one good thing doth belong to them; not one *Iota*, or Tittle of God's Mercy, precious Promises, and comfortable Truth, is applicable to them until they do indeed begin the work of Repentance. God is not their Father, nor doth he look with an Eye of Goodness and Compassion upon them till they are indeed returning and coming unto him. And indeed, when one doth really arise, and

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is coming towards God, then our Heavenly *Father may see him yet a great way off, and go out to meet him*, Luke 15. 20. Love and Forgiveness are kindled at the very same moment when his resolutions are of going home, and these do happily meet together.

The end of telling People their Transgressing, is because many times they are blinded, and insensible of them. Indeed they may know a little slightly and confusedly, but another may better lay the Law before them, and then themselves may consider their variation from it. Sometimes they are at a stand, and as it were amazed, and they know not what to do; they may first see, and fully perceive, and then *acknowledge*, according to that Example in Ezra 10. 2. *We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange Wives of the People of the Land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.* So of every Iniquity, Transgression or Sin, whether it is complicated or single, whether many or few are concerned therein, still there is hope that God will do what he declares, which he also will as certainly as he is God. For *he is abundant in goodness and truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.* But then they must make a Covenant with their God to forsake their sins for the time to come, and hence forward to *tremble at his Commandments*, and to *do according to the Law.* But if they cover their sins, if they keep

keep and hold fast to them, then they are ſtill *guilty*, whom the ſame Truth hath here ſaid, *That he will by no means clear*, Exod. 34. 7. The word Forgiving, reſpects what is paſt, but doth not allow for the preſent or future.

What then? *Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound?* God forbid. That God may ſhew the more mercy in our manifold and greater ſins, that we may love much, when much is to us forgiven. But this, and ſuch like, is a perverſe, wicked, proud and diſdainful way of Reaſoning, Becauſe God will forgive, we will ſin yet more; becauſe he is Gracious, therefore we will provoke him; becauſe he is Good, we will preſume to offend him yet more; becauſe he will paſs by the Tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his Heritage, and make it up again, we will break, and at no time continue ſtedfaſt in his Covenant. And knowing that he will paſs it over, we will forget the Name of the Lord, and hold up our hands to ſtrange Gods; we will idolize and labour to pleaſe Men, without any regard had to him. *Shall not God ſearch this out, for he knows the ſecrets of the heart?* He doth ſee and diſcern all ſuch kind of Imaginations, which ſhoot forth into alike practices.

We ſhould do well to conſider with our ſelves, Wherefore do we deſire any forgiveneſs at God's hands? Becauſe we would partake of his Mercy, and avoid his Wrath. We would be happy, and are unwilling to be miſerable.

ſerable. Why, know we not *that the mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him; to ſuch as keep his Covenant, and to thoſe that remember his Commandments to do them*, Pſal. 103. 17, 18. *And the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*, Rom. 1. 18. and *Diſobedience*, Coloſ. 3. 6. And therefore we muſt fear God if we would partake of his gracious Attributes, and carefully eſchew all the other, that we do not fall under the ſeverity of his Vengeance. *If we would be happy, we muſt be holy; and to prevent miſery, the only way is to ſin not.*

We are but meer Creatures. All that we have is from God; and ſo is all that we expect further. We are but periſhing and imperfect at preſent; and we ſhall be yet ſomewhat more, as our hopes and deſires, our fears and averſations, give us notice of. So that if we would have the good-will and love of God, the conſequent is natural and eaſie, for our ſelves to ſhew love and good-will towards him in the mean while. And then we muſt ſin as little againſt him as poſſible. *Ye that love the Lord hate evil*, Pſal. 97. 10. And ye are to decline every falſe way: we are to endeavour to ſet forth his glory, and to honour him; which ſhuts out all manner of ſtubbornneſs, and the leaſt deſpiſing of him.

Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace whereby we may

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ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, Heb. 12. 28. We have the Promiſe and Aſſurance of that Kingdom, and to us is committed in the mean while, what is preparatory to that. The work and ſervice is given and ſhewed that we may do it: and as we are put in the condition of Servants to ſo great and honourable a Maſter as he is in Heaven, ſo it is required of us that we be faithful and willing; that is, true in the management of what is committed unto us, and ready in the performance of the ſame. Another Character that belongs to a Servant, is, That he be Wiſe, whereof our Saviour ſpeaks and promiſes to ſet ſuch over his Houſhold. Accordingly the Apoſtle intimates as much negatively; *See that ye be not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord is*, Eph. 5. 17. This muſt be in order to do the will of the Lord: And alſo, we are to be in a readineſs againſt his time of coming to demand an account. By doing of God's Will, we learn to know it better, and the performance is more eaſie; we can correct what was amiſs heretofore, and perform it more exactly for the time to come.

From the quality of Servants, we come to a more intimate Relation of Sons; which the Scripture to aſſure us of God's Love and Familiarity to Mankind, doth more often make uſe of, than the other compariſon of Servants. *I will ſpare them, as a Man ſpareth his own Son that ſerveth him*, Mal. 3. 17. Now former miſcar-

miſcarriages are paſſed over and forgotten, when there is a ſincere and actual ſervice for the time to come; where there is a conſtant deſire to pleaſe, and be accepted with God. Agreeable hereunto is the ſtile of the promiſes and calls to Repentance. *Thus ſaith the Lord, ſhall they fall and not ariſe; ſhall he turn away and not return? Why is this people of Jeruſalem ſlidden back by a perpetual back-ſliding? They hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to return*, Jer. 8. 5. But if they do return, they have forthwith aſſurance of Pardon and Forgiveneſs, according to what is written: *But if the wicked will turn from all his ſins that he hath committed, and keep all my ſtatutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die*, Ezek. 18. 21. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Iſa. 55. 7.

There are innumerable Promiſes ſcattered up and down in the Old Teſtament, and alſo in the New, to give hope and encouragement unto ſinners to return unto the Lord their God, which do anſwer all their particular doubts and fears. Whatever be their multitude and aggravation; If they *have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me ſaith the Lord*, Jer. 3. 1. Or if their ſins be as *ſcarlet* or *crimſon*, of the deepeſt die and guilt, *he will make them white as ſnow*, Iſa. 1. 18. Which

whiteneſs

whiteneſs is an emblem of Innocency; or, whatever harm they have done, *they ſhall be as wool*, which hurts none, but warms and cheriſhes. There are abundant Examples which do ratifie and confirm the ſame: God was often diſpleaſed with his own People the *Iſraelites*, and yet he was appeaſed and reconciled again. The time would fail me to ſpeak of the Harlot *Rahab*, *Sampſon*, and *Manaſſeh* the Idolatrous King; as alſo, of thoſe who came and confeſſed their deeds, and were baptized of *John* in *Jordan*; of *Mary Magdalen*, whoſe ſins were many, and yet they were forgiven; yea, even the wicked *Jews*, who delivered up our Saviour Chriſt to be Crucified: Yet theſe are called upon to *repent and be converted, that their ſins may be blotted out*, Acts 3. 19. And ſo perſecuting *Saul* obtained Mercy. Theſe things are written not to give licenſe or preſumption to Sin, but who heretofore have ſinned ignorantly or unadviſedly, they are hereby ſhewed and exhorted to come out quickly, leſt they be *ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow*, and they ſink under the burthen of their ſins. They may caſt off the burthen of ſin, or get from under it as ſoon as they will.

It is hard to ſtate and apply thoſe many gracious Texts in Holy Scripture in ſuch manner, that on the one hand the Grace of God may not be turned into Laſciviouſneſs, or be a further occaſion of continuance in ſin. ſo on the other hand, that all may be invited, and have aſſured

red Hope and Comfort to be Reconciled unto God.

Many People are apt to think that they have an allowed time of Transgression, that they have a space of disobedience and refusal of Subjection unto Almighty God, wherein they may walk in their own ways, and according to their own thoughts; yea, and they are angry to be intrenched upon, and to be deprived of that. To maintain and keep up this Liberty and Privilege, as they imagine it, they are unwilling to hearken and come over immediately unto God: but they do not withal consider, that God knoweth those and alike thoughts, every imagination in the mind, and also those sudden conceits which are presently hushed and stopped, but the Man is resolved to act by them. God discerns all these, and can point them out by their names, who are for being rebellious, setting up of themselves, and would live without God in the World; and though they will submit at last to save themselves, yet God understandeth why they would not in the mean time before: And it may be there is so much provocation and contempt therein, that God will not accept of what is offered unto him as a refuse at last; who stand out, they may stay away, and not come at all. For if you would indeed have the Favour of God, if you have not done it heretofore, you must Repent and do his Will: and if when first his Will is made known unto you,

you, you have an Averſation and Backwardneſs to it, you muſt ſhake off that and do it nevertheleſs. So if you make an haſty and ſudden Promiſe to one of God's Servants, or to himſelf immediately, that you will live obediently according to his Word and keep his Commandments; but afterwards you *diſſemble* like thoſe in *Jer.* 42.20. with him, becauſe they will be out of Sight and Knowledge, or forget and not mind your Vows which you have made to the Almighty; yet he ſits above and alſo ſearches your Heart to ſee and know whatever you do as pertaining to this. Nothing can be hid or concealed from God, who in his appointed Time will manifeſt the Counſels of the Heart, and bring forth the moſt reſerved and ſtrange Imaginations.

The Prophet did intend ſomewhat alike what is afore-mentioned, when he uſeth that Phraſe and Kind of Words, *Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted that are far from Righteouſneſs*, Iſa. 46. 12. that will not ſubmit as it were out of a Piece of Pride and Bravery, and they do of ſet Purpoſe keep off. *I bring near my Righteouſneſs, it ſhall not be far off, and my Salvation ſhall not tarry*, Verſ. 13. But they will go further off and ſtand more at a Diſtance, and delay the more that they may not ſee it. A Perverſe and contrary Manner of acting, which God doth behold and will alſo recompence it upon them. There are ſome who let God do what he will, ſend forth his Light and make further Manife-

ſtations of Truth, give more preſſing Motives and Arguments, ſend his ſeveral Sorts of Judgments, yet they will not return to thei ord. And ſo notwithſtanding all his Methods of Mercy and Truth, when there are already great Multitudes brought over and converted, yet they reckon it as it were a greater Piece of Gallantry and Honour, that for all that they will not be perſwaded. In that exceeding Glory of the Church by the vaſt Multitude of the Gentiles coming in, yet ſome will ſtill be rebellious, yea, and refuſe to come. And therefore it is, that a Denunciation and Threatning is put as it were juſt in the Middle of all thoſe Bleſſings and Promiſes; *for the Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee ſhall periſh; yea, thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted,* Iſa. 60. 12. If that be their Humour and Reſolution, ſo it may be to *kick againſt the Pricks*, to run their Heads violently againſt a Stone-Wall, to ſet themſelves as it were againſt their God. When he hath propheſied and foretold of ſuch an univerſal Reformation, they will, what lieth in them make God a Liar, for themſelves will yet ſtill refuſe to be reformed. O wicked Fools! Poor ignorant Souls! This you cannot do, but confirm his Word the more. For his holy Spirit doth foreſee this Stubbornneſs and Refractorineſs of yours, and even ſpeaks of it ſome Thouſands of Years before your ſelves practice it. That the Purpoſe of God might ſtand, and what himſelf hath ſaid ſhall be fulfilled. Neverthe-

verthelefs for your evil Intent and Malice of Heart you ſhall ſmart and be puniſhed for the ſame. *They ſhall periſh, yea, and be utterly waſted*; and then themſelves ſhall know whether it would not have been better for them to have ſerved God, than (as they did) to have went on in their Perverſneſs and Oppoſition.

There are two main Ends, the Glory of the great God and the Good of his Creatures. This laſt is dependant and conſequent to the other, and with reſpect to himſelf Man is to reflect all back from whence it firſt came. God doth make thoſe precious Promiſes of good and continuance unto us. *They ſhall inherit the Land for ever, the Branch of my planting, the Work of my Hands that I may be glorified*, Iſa. 60. 21. Now if any ſhould act ignorantly, out of a ſelfiſh but miſtaken Spirit, conſult only for their own Good and Safety, not thinking ſo much of the Glory of God; This is to alter and tranſverſe his Method, and by their thus doing themſelves will have the leſs Good, if they do not miſs of all. Theſe act unworthily and contemptuouſly. But yet they do much worſe, and are worthy of ſorer Puniſhment, who are not contented to let God alone, but they have a ſecret Purpoſe as it were to diſhonour him. If they think that God may be glorified by ſuch a thing, they will with a ſecret Imagination what lieth in them, croſs that Intent and Purpoſe. VVho will endeavour to diſannul what he hath ſaid, and try to defeat what he hath purpoſed and

intends to bring to paſs. *Whom God hath exalted, they conſult to caſt him down from his Excellency. They bleſs with their Mouth, but they curſe inwardly*, Pſal. 62. 4. VVho after the manner of Hypocrites talk of God and his Glory, but at the ſame time they both think otherwiſe in their Hearts, and alſo practiſe contrary in their Actions. God hath vowed to puniſh ſuch Iniquity. He doth firſt defeat and then over-rule their wicked Imaginations and Practices to his own greater Glory. *He that ſitteth in the Heavens ſhall laugh, the Lord ſhall have them in Deriſion*, Pſal. 2. 4. He doth behold all the cunning Contrivances and Actings of Men towards him. *For the Lord is a God of Knowledge and by him Actions are weighed*, 1 Sam. 2. 3. of whatever Kind they be, whether good or Evil, whether they pleaſe or provoke him. He knows with what Heart and Intent each thing is done.

Strange! That any of the Sons of Men who are but meer Creatures, who are weak and dying, ſubject to Pain here and Miſery hereafter; liable to Death here and Damnation hereafter; ſo likewiſe they are capable of receiving Good and Happineſs, and theſe come from without or can be manifeſted from within; yet they ſhould not endeavour at all times to behave themſelves rightly towards the great Lord and Diſpoſer of all things in the whole World. All that we have already is from God, and he hath reſerved more which he can diſpenſe forth according to his own good Will

and

and Pleasure. His Favour and loving Kindness are most worthy to be sought after, for it gives Peace and Assurance at present, and is better than Life it self, which doth relish and perceive all things, and then transmits over to an eternal State of Blessedness. Who would not partake of this? For even the Desire and Enjoyment of Sensuality, the Endeavours after being great and highly esteemed, redounds all to this at last, that he may be an happy Man. To be so for all Eternity is rather to be chosen, than to be so only for a short Time. Nay, an assured Hope and Expectation of that is to be preferred before the present Pleasure of Sin; for as every one feels within himself, and is sensible of, there is a certain fearful Expectation of the End of that which is Death and Punishment. *Who will shew us any Good?* Psal. 4. 6. is the Language of every one: Where and how it may be had, is the great Thought and searching of Heart; yea, and there is an actual Endeavour after it where it may be had with some little Pains and Labour, as appears by the several Actions, Ends and Designs of Mankind. And though the Generality of the World hath been long settled on the Lees, and they do still continue so. They are sunk down into Earthliness and this present Life: And they being wholly taken up with the Conveniences and small perishing Pleasures of this Life; they do not care to rise and ascend up higher. But yet they would do well to give heed unto those Workings and

Movings of their Soul; for that equally reaches after Happiness, and covets after somewhat which is wanting in order to it, as the Body desires Food and Health towards Preservation of its Life here.

This is only the Time of Trial and State of Preparation. If we can shew our selves faithful and overcome, but all our Acts here are in Order and Tendency to somewhat hereafter. They are but Means towards the End, and as a Scaffold towards the building up an House eternal in the Heavens. Nothing here is compleat and for it self. All we are still passing on, and like wayfaring Men, who have a Refreshment but no Abode; who make some Stop, but no continued sitting down. And when we would as it were rest and fix up our Abode; yet the very Succession, Change, Perishing and Wearines of our Acts teach us thus much. The Times and Seasons instruct us in this; the Four Quarters of the Year, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter: The constant Course of Day and Night, also Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Manhood and declining Age; the Times of Labour, Recreation, Eating and Drinking; all these pass on. Too many are like Men amazed and astonied, they know not what all this means. *They know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in Darkness, all the Foundations of the Earth are out of course*, Psal. 82. 5. Though the Light hath shined and manifested what their End is of being here, and what is required of them, yet they are willingly

ly ignorant, but go on as the reſt do. *This is the Manner of the Inhabitants of the Earth that dwell careleſly, that ſay in their Hearts, We are and none beſides us*, Zeph. 2. 15. There is a ſecret diſowning of God above, or if they acknowledge him by a few Acts of outward Worſhip, yet they confine all to that; but they have not to do with him in the common Actions and general Courſe of their Life. Here they conclude that they are left to themſelves, and theſe things they imagine are in their own Power. Some others will have Reſpect unto God in little trivial Concerns, but for thoſe of greater Moment, they do not take Counſel of him; nor yet are directed by his Law, nor yet do they conſider rightly for his Glory. Were Men verily perſwaded and did they act accordingly, That God is to be obeyed in all things and at all Times; not only in his Preſence in the Sanctuary, but alſo when they are more Apt to forget him at home and abroad, in their going out and coming in. Not only before his Saints and Servants, as *Paul* did intimate concerning the *Philippians*, but alſo when they are abſent and afar off: The Lord's Name is to be praiſed from the riſing of the Sun unto the going down thereof: So in Man's going forth unto his Work and Labour until the Evening. And then we are to lie down in Remembrance of him, and to riſe up again to glorifie him To think upon him whilſt in Bed and awaking; and as others Deviſe Iniquity in their Beds, ſo our ſelves ſhould forecaſt

which Way we ſhall moſt ſerve and honour him. If this were univerſally practiſed by all Perſons in all Places, we ſhould ſee another kind of World, than as yet hath been. And do we not think it would be better and more happy with Mankind if they did thus, then as now they do in living ſecurely and negligently.

The Miſtake and Errour is, that they do not ſee the different and miſerable Effects till it is come upon them. So the Prophet ſaith in *Zeph.* 2. concerning *Nineveh.* That when ſhe ſhall be deſolate and uninhabited, then People ſhall reflect and look back upon what hath brought this Judgment on her. And ſo when the World comes to be puniſhed for their Evil and Iniquity, then they ſhall call to remembrance and conſider what brought all this Miſery upon them. But then it is too late and to no Purpoſe but to aggravate their own Folly, and to torment them yet more. And ſo contrariwiſe, It would have been well with them if they had done after this and that Manner. Why, you were told and warned of as much by the Word of God for whom it was impoſſible to lie. So that they might even then have been aſſured it would as certainly be as now they find it preſent upon them. It was neceſſary to be told of it before, becauſe they might have done ſome things for which they ſhould have *been worthy to eſcape*, Luke 21. 36. and alſo obtain Good for which they did labour and endure, the foregoing Conditions ſhould be performed; they

ſhould

ſhould be in the mean while rendred meet which the ſame God did preſs unto by the ſame Word and Truth, which ſpoke beforehand of theſe things.

People are apt to ſtumble and be blinded at the Doings of God. *Our Fathers underſtood not thy Wonders in* Egypt, *Pſal.* 106. 7. till after they were over. And ſo it was of their Dealings towards his Servants the Prophets, whom they did perſecute unto Death, and afterwards they acknowledged them to have been faithful Meſſengers ſent from God So whilſt the Meſſias lived and dwelt amongſt Men, they doubted whether it was he. But after they had crucified and put him to Death, then they underſtood it. *Now when the Centurion and they that were with him, watching Jeſus ſaw the Earthquake, and thoſe things that were done, they feared greatly, ſaying, truly this was the Son of God,* Mat. 27. 54. Now Jeſus did in his Lifetime both by his Doctrine and Miracles, manifeſt ſufficiently before the Jews that he was the holy one ſent from God. *No Man can do thoſe Miracles that thou doſt except God be in him,* John 3. 2. *The Works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame Works that I do, bear Witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me,* John 7. 36. And ſo they were amazed at his Doctrine, for it was with Power, and he taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes. It was ſublime and divine, and and ſo they might even then be convinced and apprehend it. Thoſe many, great and wonderful

derful things done throughout the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, were as evident a Demonſtration of his being the Son of God, as what appeared afterwards. And when they did oppoſe him continually from Time to Time, and ſtill they were more and more convinced of his Truth and Divinity, yet ſtill to go on and to the utmoſt Pitch of their Malice and Rage as to kill the Body. And when the whole Time of Trial is over, then to acknowledge that they were in a Fault, and would not have done it; to pretend Ignorance for an Excuſe or Mitigation of their Sin, when it was either *willing Ignorance*, or a falſe Plea, God who knoweth the Hearts will judge of all this. Our Saviour notably confutes ſuch groſs Hipocrites and Diſſemblers, *Mat.* 23. 29,30,31,32. *Who ſay, if we had been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets*; when at that very Time they did the ſame againſt Chriſt (whom the moſt moderate Fame did ſay, he was one of the Prophets riſen again, but others Chriſt, and others *Elias*) as their Fathers did againſt the Prophets. And ſo it was clearly manifeſted that themſelves did not only allow the Deeds of their Fathers; but themſelves at that Inſtant did the ſame. And as they were Witneſſes againſt themſelves that they were Children of them which killed the Prophets, ſo they did afterwards *fill up the Meaſure of their Fathers*, for they proceeded and did kill him alſo of whom God ſpake to *Moſes*,

Moſes, I will raiſe them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee, Deut. 18. 18. who was more than all the Prophets, or the Angels, yea the very Chriſt, the anointed one of God.

This is the Abomination of Hypocriſie, that when they do wickedly againſt God, they would juſtifie themſelves before Men, and make a Shew as if they had not ſinned, nor done corruptly. They would firſt hide their Sin as *Adam*, but if it is known as publick Acts are, then they would put a Colour and Pretext to it. But what are your Sins to us, or what are we that ye ſhould plead with or extenuate your ſelves before? Your Sins are againſt the Lord, and he is the Judge himſelf. *Oh let the Wickedneſs of the Wicked come to an End, but eſtabliſh the Juſt: For the righteous God trieth the Hearts and Reins*, Pſal. 7. 9. He obſerves the ſeveral Steps and Gradations thereof. He ſees how far it will go. And it may be, that is one Reaſon why he ſuffers it to proceed ſo far, that the Folly thereof may be more manifeſt, that Sin may appear to be exceeding ſinful; that when he comes to diſſect and lay it open with his eternal Truth, we may ſee the infinite Guilt and Aggravation thereof. Like a putrifying Sore, which the longer it is let alone, the worſe it grows.

If God ſhould ariſe in his Anger and lift up himſelf, Evil and Tranſgreſſion could never have proceeded ſo far as now it hath done. If God had ſpread out his Light univerſally to reprove

reprove the Deeds of Mankind, there had not been ſo much Sin and Ungodlineſs. If his Truth were clearly, univerſally and fully made known, it would prevent a great deal of Sin and Errour. Neither then had all Fleſh corrupted its Way upon Earth as now it hath done. But there hath been the *Hour of the wicked, and the Power of Darkneſs*, Luke 22. 53. In which things have been ſuffered ſo to be. That Hour draws towards its End, and the Light doth begin to ſhine. Then alſo Sin and Iniquity will have its Period. It will make an End of Tranſgreſſion and bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs. *For he will finiſh the Work and cut it ſhort in Righteouſneſs, becauſe a ſhort Work will the Lord make upon the Earth*, Rom. 9. 28. What hath been ſome Thouſand Years in Agitation and Continuance, may be brought to an utter End within the Compaſs of a Year or leſs. Even as we ſee, that he who hath been a Sinner all his Life long, is converted in an Hour or a Minute. By one full and clear Conviction of the exceeding Evil and Danger of Sin, he may be induced and brought over imediately to forſake it. If we were throughly made ſenſible of the infinite Goodneſs and Glory of God, and how he is diſhonoured by the breaking of his Law, this alone Conſideration ſhould move any one, who hath the common Senſe and Knowledge of him, to refrain from Tranſgreſſion. If we did ſee after the Manner of Men, from the Example of an enraged Prince who hath the Pow-

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er to be revenged on ungrateful Rebels, and is conſtant to what he ſwears or ſaith: *God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not, he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow and made it ready*, Pſal. 7. 11, 12. He is more and more diſpleaſed day by day; and as the Creature continually provokes him, God only forbears to execute his Vengeance, to ſee whether he will turn or not. The longer man puts it off, it will be worſe for him: How grievous and abominable is it to ſtand, as it were, at defiance and oppoſition with God? For a worm to conteſt with, and to wriggle againſt its Maker; for a Potſherd to ſtrive with the Lord of the World. He juſtly declares himſelf to be an Enemy to ſuch wicked doers. *Ah! I will eaſe me of mine Adverſaries, and avenge me of mine Enemies*, Iſa. 1. 24. He only ſends out his Word to give notice thereof to ſee if they will ſubmit. He ſends out the Son of his Love with an Offer of Reconciliation, to prove whether they will receive his Meſſage and Counſel, who ſaith, *Agree with thine Adverſary quickly, leaſt the Adverſary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be caſt into Priſon: Verily, thou ſhalt not come out thence till thou haſt paid the utmoſt Farthing*, Mat. 5. 25, 26. The more quickly thou agreeſt with thine Adverſary, the more ſure thou art to be reconciled unto him. Thou muſt be reconciled to him firſt or laſt, or thou wilt be eternally miſerable. The longer thou ſtandeſt off, thou

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doſt the more provoke and enrage him. And wouldſt thou reſiſt him in the mean while, whom thou muſt at length ſubmit unto? Nay, when thou art willing to be at Peace with him. Even thoſe who are now reconciled, and were once afar off, are vexed within themſelves that ever they ſhould have the leaſt Enmity againſt ſo gracious and ſo good a God. *The Adverſaries of the Lord ſhall be aſhamed.* And if thy ſelf doſt come to be agreed with him, thou wilt not only repent and be grieved for all thy former Ignorance, ſtrange Imaginations, but even for this Oppoſition and Doubting whether thou ſhouldſt preſently come over unto thy God. Conſider he is ſtronger and mightier than thou, He is all-wiſe and jealous of his Honour, and alſo he will be glorified in his Creatures. And ſhall they offend him now, becauſe they hope hereafter to pleaſe and pacifie him? Or will they take Advantage over him alſo as ſome do over his Servants, to affront them the more becauſe they know beforehand, ſuch will forgive. *Is it good that God ſhould ſearch you out, or as one man mocketh another, do ye ſo mock him?* Job 13. 9. *Thine hand ſhall find out all thine Enemies; thy right hand ſhall find out thoſe that hate thee,* Pſal. 21. 8. That is, *find* them out to puniſh them; and therefore God certainly knows them with the meaſure and degree of Hatred, they conceive againſt him. The ſin is againſt him, and alſo the pardon belongs to him; and alſo, he is the God to whom

whom Vengeance belongeth. Now what is the Reaſon why he doth ſpare ſome, and puniſh others? He will do according to what he hath ſaid, *He ſhall Judge the World with Righteouſneſs, and the People with his Truth*, Pſal. 96. 13. And by that Truth he takes an eſtimate of People even now.

God, who knows the hearts, will put a difference between Infirmity and Perverſeneſs, between unavoidable and willing Ignorance, what is to be allowed to the temptation, and what is their own fault: He doth apprehend all the meaning of his own Law and Word, and alſo all the doings of all the Sons of Men, every motion and thought of their Soul, and all that is within them. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*, Jer. 17. 9, 10. He takes exact account and cognizance of all things; and here it is ſaid that it is in order to give to every Man according to the fruit of his doings; ſo that certainly it muſt be the better way to ſubmit inſtantly. For the preſent refuſal and neglect doth provoke him, in the mean while thoſe ſtrugglings and conteſts do diſpleaſe him; when he exhorts and admoniſhes, if they *rebel and vex his holy Spirit, he will turn to be their enemy*, Iſa. 63. 10. and fight againſt them. We know not when this will be, and therefore People ſhould be

be exceeding cautious how they do in the least displease him: When the Scripture speaks of God being angry, the same Word invites again to Reconciliation with him. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* Amos 3. 3. Now God is continually with us, though many are not sensible thereof; for he is with us in our going out and coming in, and he is with us in all our ways; and this would be a continued fear and trouble to the mind, unless we are at peace with him, and then it is a comfort and an assurance: And therefore those who are afar off, do not think of God, but forget him, not knowing that they might have the thoughts of God, and the remembrance of his Name; be as familiar, yea, and as delightful as now they go on in their own darkness and imaginations; for here is danger and continued doubt. They might come to live under the continued sense of God, with the same, yea, and more exceeding comfort, than others do with the thoughts of any thing; as the Bridegroom rejoyces over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee, *Isa.* 62. 3. And reciprocally his people may live comfortably, and rejoyce in the Lord their God He is a shadow from the Heat, as a great Rock in a weary Land, a shelter from the Storm, an house of Defence, or strong Habitation, *whereunto we may continually resort*, Psal. 71. 3. And many such like expressions the Holy Ghost makes use of. As a woman takes

takes care of her ſucking Child, and a *Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings*, ſo is the Lord God to his People, to aſſure them of his continued Preſervation, Love, and Familiarity towards them.

And any one may come over to be amongſt his People; as they that were not of his People do come to be of them, ſo we do warn, teſtifie and exhort all men every where, of every age, or condition of life, whatever their paſt ſins be, and of whatever nature or multitude their preſent temptation and circumſtances are, yet ſtill they are invited to partake of the loving kindneſs of the Lord. What hinders? Let the thought, imagination, or excuſe be what it will, we could ſpeak and give a ſufficient anſwer unto it, from the Grace and Truth of God: We could reaſon even from the very firſt Principle of Action, and make even the man himſelf, whether he be in a meer natural ſtate, or if he knoweth what we ſay, whether he be learned or unlearned, yet we could leave it to every man to judge what is beſt even for himſelf to do, and which is likely to tend moſt unto his own good.

Nothing is more certain and evident, Then that there is no fruit of Sin. It is *like droſs*, Pſal. 119. 119. which melts and ſlides away. The pleaſure or profit thereof paſſeth away, and comes to nothing at all; there is nothing therein which doth remain and endure; no-

thing which will abide the Fire, or ſtand in any ſtead in the evil day: Not the leaſt comfort or happineſs can poſſibly ariſe from it: Wherefore then ſhould any one continue in Sin? Or, why ſhould any one go to add Iniquity to Iniquity? To draw it on as with a Cart-Rope; when hereby he doth not only loſe ſo much good, but bring on himſelf the more guilt and miſery: If he hath offended God by former ſins, he doth yet more by preſent continuance in the ſame; if he hath been filthy he will be worſe, by wallowing yet further in the mire; and the ſooner he draws back from the ways of wickedneſs, he will abate God's diſpleaſure againſt him. No fleſh can ſtand under the power of his Anger; they cannot endure, nor are their hearts ſtrong in the day when the Lord ſhall deal with them: And ſeeing we muſt all appear before him to receive Good or Evil, to be ſentenced unto Life or Death, What can be done too much to intreat our Judge in the mean while, that we may have him favourable and propitious, and be found accepted with him? What interceſſions and care ſhould be uſed againſt this great day of Trial and everlaſting Deciſion? How ſhould we in the mean while behave our ſelves towards him, that now ſits above to take notice of thoſe who fear him and think on his Name, and alſo expecting till his Enemies be made his Footſtool? Thoſe who will not ſubmit willingly at firſt, muſt at length

length by force; who will not do it of their own accord, shall be made to do it: Wherefore should any debate or doubt arise in the minds of men concerning this? Had they not better forthwith close in with that God of whom it is graciously written, *Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*, Micah 7. 18. He would wink at, and pass by former Iniquities, if People would be careful to please him for the time to come; if they would not perversly abuse things as to stir up his Anger so much the more, because he doth not retain it; nor yet to presume upon that Mercy which he delighteth in. The right consequence is, That if God doth not retain his Anger, then they should not retain their Sins; if he delighteth in Mercy, they should both Pray, and also endeavour to be Partakers thereof; to meet God, as it were, in the way of Goodness; to have good-will towards him, that he may shew Mercy towards them; with what Affection thou behavest thy self towards God, he will manifest the same towards thee. *With the merciful thou wilt shew thy self merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thy self upright: With the pure thou wilt shew thy self pure, and with the froward, thou wilt shew thy self froward*, Psal. 18. 25, 26. According as men are, so will God be towards them.

Now seeing that every one knows that it is in the power of God to save or destroy, to do good or to punish, no man can be indifferent as to which he would partake of; for he would have the good, and avoid the evil: let him then go the most likely way to obtain the one and eschew the other; and that is not to be determined by a sudden thought, or slight apprehension of things; for such may be the temptation and delusion of Satan. But consult the Word of God, the very truth and reality of things; for seeing that God made, doth now govern, and will dispose of all things, we may rest fully assured that so it shall be as he hath said and decreed; where his Word doth promise Forgiveness, there the man may be assured thereof; as again, where it threatens Punishment, there he hath just cause to fear and dread it.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; Isa. 55. 7. But the wicked think that this may be done hereafter; so that he is for keeping to his own way in the mean while. Then he will continue and go further in a wrong way, out of which he must at length come, or perish; the longer he goes on therein, the more way it is to come back; those things which he now doth, must be undone. He must endeavour to please and be reconciled with

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that God, whom now he provokes and sets afar off. He must have an awful Regard and Reverence for him, whom he now despises. What strangeness and contradiction would it be to do those things now, which he shall hereafter really wish and desire that he had never done: Repentance comes in upon a better and more truly informed Judgment. *When the prodigal came to himself*, Luke 15. 17. then came in him the resolution of going home, and framing right Principles of Life henceforwards: Then it is discerned that he was in an Error heretofore, that he had chosen the worst part, but now he would mend, and lay hold of the better; then he verily assents, and is really resolved, That if such a thing were to do again, he would not do it. But how can this be, that when either he doth already, or might know as much, yet he doth the same?

The whole doth depend upon a full and true knowledge, That God is to be obeyed and pleased in all things; and that it is best for men in all circumstances, and at all times so to do. If in one instance, so likewise in another, and then in a third, and so throughout all parts of our Duty. It is better to be temperate in all things, than to run to the full excess of Riot, to *do Righteousness at all times*, Psal. 106. 3. then to practice wrong or deceit at any time: It is better to observe the several parts and stated seasons of Worship, than to live in irreligion or contempt of

God: It is grievous to have forſaken God, and it is good to draw near and hold faſt unto him in every thing; this may be known by that long ſeries and tryal, how it is with the condition of Mankind; thoſe ſeveral diſpenſations and accidents, the ſundry changes and chances of this mortal Life, the temptations, and what may ſeem ſevere trials, are to inſtruct in thus much. When the Hiſtory of God's Church and People is rehearſed, with an account of what things happened unto them. This, or the like inference, is made, *That they might keep his Statutes, and obſerve his Laws*, Pſal. 105. 45. And this is recorded for their Children, and to us, *To the intent that we ſhould not forget God, nor turn aſide from his Covenant.* And as *Moſes* allowed Divorce to the *Jews*, for the hardneſs of their hearts; ſo it may be ſuppoſed that God doth admit Mankind to Repentance for their Ignorance and Imperfection; that if when they did not at firſt apprehend the excellency of his ways, yet if when they are convinced of the miſery and deceitfulneſs of their own ways, and when they have ſome trial and experience of God's ways, and there they find a real Worth and Goodneſs, then they ſhould yield, and come over unto God.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Herein it is diſcourſed of that falſe Thought in the Hearts of many People, That if they ſhould ſubmit preſently unto the Obedience of God, they ſhall be loſers, and diſappointed of ſo much Pleaſure and Conveniency in the mean while: They ſhall miſs of ſo much imagined Happineſs, and fall into Vexation, Trouble, and Miſery.

MAN hath ſome ſeeming Reaſon or Excuſe why he ſtands off; Produce, and let it come forth, if an Anſwer and Satisfaction may be given unto it. *Produce your Cauſe, ſaith the Lord, bring forth your ſtrong Reaſons, ſaith the King of Jacob,* Iſa. 41. 21. No excuſe will ſerve with the God with whom we have to do, before whom all things are naked and opened, who underſtands our thoughts afar off, even what is at the bottom of that Excuſe. He requires Obedience and Subjection from every Creature, and from that there is no Diſpenſation or Allowance. Now every leaſt excuſe or delay, is a ſeeming kind of denial, and God diſcerns it as ſuch. There is ſome ground of that backwardneſs and unwillingneſs; If he would but conſider his own thoughts, he may apprehend wherefore he refuſes: Is it not the third thing aſſigned, *viz.* People think that if they ſubmit preſently unto the Obedience of God, they ſhall be loſers, and diſappointed of ſo much

Pleaſure and Conveniency in the mean while; they ſhall miſs of ſo much imagined Happineſs, and fall into Vexation, Trouble, and Miſery.

What a ſtrange Imagination doth here preſent it ſelf at firſt; That Men ſhould be loſers by the Service of God; for they do not diſcern a future Reward, which will be a more abundant compenſation for all preſent diſadvantages; the conſideration of a future Reward, and preſent conveniency, do quite take off all manner of Excellency and Deſerving in any of the doings of the Children of Men. When God ſhall rehearſe and give a true account of the nature of his Government, and our Subjection, with an Hiſtorical Relation of it ſince he created Man upon the Earth, *The Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day.* For therein will appear his Bounty and Goodneſs in a moſt eminent manner, without the leaſt Thanks or degree of Merit due to any of his Creatures. For by Reaſon of our Imperfection and Want, there is ſo much Articling and Selfiſhneſs in us, that we will as it were do nothing for God, but what we are forced unto to keep our own Peace, or out of the Proſpect of Good and Recompence. As on the other hand, a little Frightning of Pain or ſeeming Inconvenience doth keep us off from our Duty unto him: What ſhall I get by it is the Queſtion of almoſt every one in what he takes in Hand? And as the Aſſurance of Profit and Advantage

vantage ſhall engage him in ſuch a Work; ſo again, the Fear of Loſs and Inconvenience ſhall make him refrain.

Pleaſure and Pain are (if I may ſo expreſs it) the two moving Wheels of Action; which do actually incline to follow ſuch things, and fly from others, and thus he doth in common Matters. Now herein ſeems to be compriſed the *Myſtery of God*, That though in all things he requires of Men, there is a real Goodneſs and Worth, yea, and they are to be deſired; yet again, through wiſe Diſpoſal for a State of Tryal, they have a Shew of Evil, Loſs, and there is an Averſation to them: The Things of God are found moſt excellent, both upon full Examination and and Experience, yet they appear as harſh and aukward to the Generality of Mankind; which makes them fly off and keep ſo at a Diſtance. Now, were they informed of the Truth of the Matter, they would act ſo as to the things of God, as now they do to the common things of this World: And even what appears harſh and frightful, they would undertake it, if it would tend to a greater Good if it would (as we commonly ſay) tend unto Account, then they would be for it; All manner of Eaſe and Sloth ſlides away at the preſent; there can no Good come poſſibly of it. Now by Hardſhip and Diligence many great and good things are accompliſhed. People might thus think and reaſon within themſelves, That when they give way to ſin and

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idleneſs, for ſeeming good and pleaſure, yet if by a contrary manner of Life, there would accrue more real Good and laſting Satisfaction, this ſhould with them turn the Scales, and make them ſeek after the other; not only to confine unto the preſent, but withal take into conſideration the Things to come; not to be fixed only upon what is juſt before them, but to have an Eye unto the Recompence of Reward; to have reſpect all along unto the Good and Glory which excelleth; to forbear and let ſlip a little preſent conveniency, out of foreſight and aſſurance of future and real Good. As again, To willingly ſuffer Loſs, or endure Hardſhip in the way of Duty, that God may make up for all in the Day of Retribution.

Indeed, all the actions of Man's Life are little, and may be done; there is nothing required of us but what may be performed, and is ſoon over; ſo that we may boldly undertake it upon the Divine Command, upon God's Promiſe of Grace and Strength, to go through therewith; and alſo, from his further Favour and Encouragement. *Whatſoever thine hand findeth thee to do, do it with all thy might.* In whatever Work thou mayeſt be accepted by God, as having the direction of his Word, and the teaching of his Spirit, perform it readily and ſpeedily, during this Life of Vanity; before thy hands and feet are tyed and bound up with grave Clothes, whileſt thou

thou haſt powers of Action. Or if thou be unwilling and would be excuſed, beware leſt the Thing be taken from thee, and given to another, who will perform the ſame, and ſo thou loſeſt the deſigned Reward, and thou at laſt be judged as one afraid, or as one who would not do the Will of God.

Upon his being our Creator and our Lord, our Father and our Maſter, he might command us to do ſuch a thing, and we ſhould, as obedient Children and Servants, forthwith do the ſame. Agreeable hereunto was the practice of God's Servants of old Time, as *Noah*, *Lot*, *Abraham* and *Jacob*, they did Serve and Worſhip God, and did many things purely out of his Command, without reaſoning and mercinarineſs. That is, without knowing wherefore, and alſo without a particular Promiſe of any more Reward from the hands of God. With ſuch Obedience, or Service, God was well pleaſed; and they are recorded for our admonition and enſample, upon whom the ends of the World are come: That albeit *Glory* and *Immortality*, and *Eternal Life*, are more clearly diſcovered and made known unto us than they were to our Fathers, yet we ſhould be altogether as zealous and diligent in the Work of the Lord as they were, without ſo much conſideration had to what is further promiſed and aſſured unto us; but we ſhould do it only becauſe the Lord requires it, and then leave it unto him whether he will make

make any Recompence; yea, and be contented if he ſhould give none. We ſhould acknowledge our ſelves *unprofitable Servants, we have done only what was our duty to do.* It was God who brought us into being, and gave us power thus to act: ſo it is but a due return of our being formed by him, even for the Engine to move as he would have it: It is juſt to comply with the End of our Maker; or, if this be left to our choice and freedom, it is better when ſo performed of a willing and ready mind; for God loves ſuch a diſpoſition of Soul. And if there be ſuch an Heart in People, all the future Diſcourſe would be in vain, for they would both offer and act willingly, without being preſſed to it: Let the way be only ſhewed, they will both walk, yea, and run in it, without being pricked forward; let it be declared what they have to do, and they will forthwith actually do it, without ſo much argument and perſuaſion. If any one throughly aſſures, and clearly demonſtrates unto them, That the Lord hath ſaid and enjoyned them thus, there is need of no more words, for we will do it. Truly God is good, and all things *ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and that are called according to the purpoſe of his Will*, Rom. 8. 28. And we will truſt in the general, without being particularly told how the ſeveral things are ſo: We will commit our way unto the Lord, and keep ſtedfaſt in his Covenant, come Life or Death,

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Shame or Diſhonour, good Report or evil Report, Loſs or Advantage; being aſſured that God will ſo over-rule things in his Providence, that even theſe contrary things ſhall tend yet more to our real and enduring Happineſs. Thoſe Saints of old, who were hungry and thirſty, are now come to that place where they are filled, and they do enjoy the fulneſs and fatneſs of God's Houſe. It is a greater degree of Happineſs to have been miſerable, to reflect that the contrary Evil is done away, and there ſucceeds in the room a greater good and fulneſs; ſo that even Self-denial and Hardſhip do make way for more Enjoyment and Reſt. Let this mind be in you which was in Chriſt Jeſus, who went about doing good; whoſe Meat and Drink it was to do the Will of his Heavenly Father, who did not much regard the periſhing Comforts of this World, as to be fully employed in and faithfully diſcharge that Meſſage he was ſent about. So *Job* did more regard the Words of God's Mouth than his neceſſary Food. For the one was of more Concernment and greater Advantage to himſelf than the other, as it was found at laſt. And though this might not be at firſt apprehended, yet the ſenſe of his Duty to God did make him give the Eſteem and Preference. Where is Love and Good-will towards God, this makes that his Commandments do not ſeem grievous. They are indeed repreſented ſo by the Tempter, who would keep

keep off from the Obſervance of them; but they are not ſo in themſelves. And this hath been at ſundry times cleared and manifeſted both by the inſpired Men, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt; and alſo by other Labourers in God's Vineyard, who out of their VVritings, and from the very Reality and Reaſon of things, have brought out the Truth. The like alſo we have endeavoured by God's Grace and Aſſiſtance to ſhew, and even to demonſtrate unto the moſt natural and ungodly Man. VVho keeps off becauſe of this Frightning and Temptation, and therefore we addreſſed unto him, if he would but judge of what he is vainly afraid to practiſe; for then his former Fear and Averſation would wear off, and he would experimentally find the Truth and Reality of things, as they are there ſpoken of. The Subject is, *Of Happineſs*; wherein it is fully and particularly manifeſted that the greateſt Happineſs of this Life conſiſteth in the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments, in Oppoſition to the Pleaſures of Sin, or the pretended Conveniency of Diſobedience. By *Richard Stafford*. VVhich is ſhewed as to the preſent Evil and Pain of ſeveral Sins there named, and alſo of the Good and Excellency of the commanded Duties there inſtanced in. And the like may in the ſame manner be demonſtrated of all the reſt, either mentioned in the VVord of God, or ever heard of, even as to all the Actions and Doings of Men,

Men, whatever they are concerned in, ſo it is differently of the Good and Evil, Duty and Sin, of what is commanded or what is forbidden. *Therefore I eſteem all thy Precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every falſe Way*, Pſal. 119. 128. The like Nature runs through them all that they are really good and deſirable, yea, and to be obſerved. So in every falſe VVay there is Deſtruction and Miſery which ſhould be avoided. And was there a like Obſervance of all God's Precepts, and an abſtaining from all Appearance of Evil, any one would both judge and experimentally find the ſame, as the Man after God's own Heart did. But by reaſon of that abundant Sin and Corruption which is every where, and hath ſpread it ſelf over all Nations and Men; yea, and there is alſo a reſerved Iniquity in thoſe who ſeem to be VVorſhippers and Servants of God; which like the Herb that cauſed Death in the Pot, ſo this occaſions Sowerneſs and Miſery: And therefore this great Truth is ſcarce diſcernable.

O that thou hadſt hearkned to my Commandments; then had thy Peace been as a River, and thy Righteouſneſs as the Waves of the Sea, Iſa. 48. 18. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have Reſpect unto all thy Commandments*, Pſal. 119. 6. I ſhall not live in Doubt and Miſery: I ſhall not be diſappointed of ſo much pretended Good or Conveniency, as may be thought to be had in the Tranſgreſſion of this or that Command-

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ment, as the Sinner thinks expedient. In the forementioned Place of *Iſa.* 48. 18. It is firſt ſaid, *Thy Peace had been as a River*, and then *thy Righteouſneſs as the Waves of the Sea*, which mounts up and aſcends on high. So it is here ſaid in the following Verſe of this Pſalm laſt quoted, *I will praiſe thee with Uprightneſs of Heart, when I ſhall have learned thy righteous Judgments.* Both which are given to ſignifie, and from hence we may learn that the Happineſs of God's choſen doth not only conſiſt in a *perfect Peace* and *true Satisfaction of Mind*, tho' theſe are things very deſirable, and beyond what the World gives. But it breaks forth into Singing and Joy unſpeakable, full of Glory. *That I may ſee the Good of thy choſen, that I may rejoyce in the Gladneſs of thy Nation*, Pſal. 106. 5. Here are aſcending Steps, one after another. There is not only a Freedom from Evil and Miſery, nor yet only a Stayedneſs and full Content of Mind; but it hath further Delight and Refreſhment, and alſo can expreſs it ſelf forth, as others ſhew forth outward Signes of Rejoycing. So that when the World ſhall be perfectly obedient, and what is conſequent to that, reconciled unto God, when *his People ſhall be all righteous*, Iſa. 60. 21. and each Man and Woman throughout the Earth obſerve all Parts and every leaſt Tittle of their Duty to God, they ſhall not be dull nor yet in deep Silence. But they ſhall be more merry, talkative and pleaſant in ſpeaking of and praiſing God

God for his wonderful works, than now they are, or have ever yet been about other things. *Their Heart shall rejoyce as through Wine, their Heart shall rejoyce in the Lord*, Zech. 10.7. which will very much exceed the Mirth of Tabret or Harp, or the *Joy of Feasts*. Their Talking shall be of God's Doings, declaring his Truth and singing forth the Praises of the Lord: In which they shall find more Variety, yea, and agreeable Satisfaction, than heretofore in spending their Time in hearing or telling of some new thing, some little Novelty, idle Story, or foolish Jesting. They shall more rejoyce in the several Parts of Duty, than formerly in the Pleasures of Sin for a Season. All the Briskness and pretended Merriment of that compared with the Joy and Extacy of God's Chosen, shall be darkened and exceeded as the Light of the Moon is by that of the Sun; or as the small and faint burning of a Candle is to the Lights of Heaven. The seeming Activity of Souldiers and men of Valour; all that Shew of Briskness, Renown and Courage, whereby in Times past the *Abaddon* and Destroyer hath stirred up Thousands to butcher and kill one another shall be infinitely exceeded by the Lord of Hosts, and by his Army of Saints, according to what is written, *They shall run like mighty Men, They shall climb the Wall like Men of War, and they shall march every one on his Ways, and they shall not break their Ranks, They shall run to and fro in the City, they shall run upon the Walls, they shall climb up upon the Houses: They shall enter in at the Windows like a Thief; and the Lord shall utter his Voice before his Army, for his Camp is very great; for he is strong that executeth his Word; for the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide*

it, Joel 2.7,9,11. Their Speed, Resolution and Order shall as much exceed that of the most excellent and victorious Army which was ever heard of since the World began, as they do a Flock or Herd of Sheep.

God is glorified by Action; when the Powers which he hath given, are exerted, and then he will give yet more; when little Creatures do great things; when what before lay hid, is put forth. *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*, Psal. 110. 3. The Lord himself shall again awake as one out of Sleep, and like a Giant refreshed with Wine. As he endues every thing that hath Life and Breath with Powers of Action or Motion, so himself will cause that that it be manifested forth, he will subdue his Enemies in the hindermost Parts, and put them to a perpetual Shame. Those tormenting Passions shall be stretched out and come forth in the Wicked: So again, the delighting Affections shall be stirred up in the Good, and vent forth in the utmost Gladness and Pleasure. *Thou shalt increase my Greatness, and comfort me on every Side. I will also praise thee with the Psaltery, even thy Truth O my God, unto thee will I sing with the Harp O Thou holy One of* Israel. *My Lips shall greatly rejoyce when I sing unto thee, and my Soul which thou hast redeemed*, Psal. 71. 21, 22, 23. Here in this World of Opposition, Sin and Temptation, we do meet with *great and sore Troubles*; but when once those are done away, there will succeed a more than proportionable Degree of Joy and Consolation. This is figured by that Phrase so usual in the Prophets, of Joy in the Harvest. It is but a faint and imperfect Comparison to set forth the Transports and Extasies which shall be of God's People. As a *Bride-*

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groom rejoyceth over his Bride, so shall the Lord rejoyce oves his People; and they reciprocally shall joy in the God of their Salvation, who were formerly possessed with Horrour and Dread, they do at length arrive at Reverence and Good-will, and then their Souls do greatly rejoyce in God, and he doth put Gladness into their Hearts more than can be expressed by Corn and Wine, or any worldly thing. When we do sincerely and actually endeavour to be holy, as he that hath called us is holy, then he is perfectly reconciled unto us. Notwithstanding his infinite Greatness, he doth humble himself to become familiar to our Nature. All former Averseness and Enmity are vanished away: And we being fully resolved to keep his Commandments at all Times, and that our Lord shall guide us continually, he doth according to his gracious Promise, keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth on thee.

We may see and perceive a little Representation hereof in the Communion of Saints here on Earth; who, when they are obedient and like-minded, do find exceeding Joy and Sweetness with one another, as they talk of and derive it down from the God above. The like will be much more in the Times of universal Reformation, *when the whole Earth shall be at Rest and Quiet, it shall break forth into Singing*, Isa. 14. 7. the one before the other. The Pleasures of Sin, or the Laughter of the World are not so much to that as sounding Brass and tinkling Cymbal compared with the best Musick. All carnal Joy is now sudden, mix'd and unsatisfying: But what comes down from the Father of Spirits, or arises from doing his Will, that

doth remain and is ſincere, gives a bleſſed Expectation till we awake after his Likeneſs and are ſatisfied with it. The Joy is ſuitable with our imperfect Condition here, it increaſes as we grow up towards Perfection; and is in us a Well of Water ſpringing up unto eternal Life. This Kind of Joy doth tranſmit over to Enjoyment. It is a little Foretaſt of that, wherewith we ſhall be happy for ever. It is ſenſibly in us according as we have Aſſurance, and approach near to the receiving thereof.

There is an Agreeableneſs between our Work and Reward. Now our Work is to keep the Commandments of God, and be doing his Will. The Commandments are for *our Good always*; as every thing muſt be which proceeds from him, who is moſt perfectly and eſſentially good. *Bleſſed are they that keep Judgment, and he that doth Righteouſneſs at all Times*, Pſal. 106. 3. It is better ſo to do at preſent; for they have more Peace and Satisfaction, as alſo the Promiſe of future Recompence.

Many things are here ſuffered in this Time of Trial, and Hour of Temptation which is come upon them that dwell on the Earth, but yet it goes well with them that fear the Lord, that fear always before him; who when they are tryed are found faithful and obedient, theſe ſhall receive the Crown of Life which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him, Who can now withſtand and overcome the Temptation, and truſt unto the Lord for a greater Recompence. If the Sin had been conſented unto, the Pleaſure or Profit thereof could never have countervailed the Loſs of preſent Peace of Mind and the bleſſed Expectation further

further on. All things are derived in order to Contentment and preſent Happineſs: Now our God doth furniſh us with every thing pertaining to this, whilſt we continue in the Way of Duty, and we do not turn aſide from his Commandments to the Right Hand or to the Left. To each of them ſingly, and to all together joyntly, there is annexed ſtrong Conſolation and Aſſurance; the one as to the preſent, and the other as to what ſhall be hereafter. We are truly pleaſed in doing what we ought, and we have a ſure and certain Hope of good things to come. Whereas in Tranſgreſſion is Doubt and Reſtleſneſs, and fearful Expectation. And ſo in abſtaining from evil and forbidden things, There may be a little Regret and Unwillingneſs through corrupt Nature; but afterwards there ſucceds more Content and Satisfaction in the Denial of it, than if one had yielded unto the Temptation. And further, there is a looking for the bleſſed Hope and glorious Enjoyment, which ſhall be to thoſe who do now comply with the Will of God.

If we go through the ſeveral Parts and Steps of our Duty, as alſo the ſeveral Degrees and Sorts of Sins, we ſhall find this to be true. Indeed, in the firſt there may be a little Irkſomneſs and Averſation, which cannot make miſerable, for it inſtantly paſſeth away. It may be reſolutely gone through with and overcome, and this would lay up a Foundation for a greater Happineſs and Reward. So in the latter there may be a ſlight Semblance of Pleaſure and Eaſe, which cannot make happy, for this ſoon paſſeth away and comes to nothing, and alſo it tends unto an exceeding Condemnation and

Loss; and further, it involves into Eternal Pain and Punishment: Besides, the Consideration of a different Futurity, It may be observed at this present Time, that though in the Way of Duty there may be Labour and Trouble to the Flesh, yet there is Joy and Peace in the inward Man, which abundantly countervails for that: So in Wickedness and Transgression, there may be a small Gratification and pleasing of the Body, but to it is annexed Fear and Vexation of Soul, which is as a bitter Allay to the other. The Soul is the Man, and he that would build up for himself a real Good and Happiness, must consult for that especially. For besides, that it is the more enduring Substance and survives the Body, so even now it gives the Resentment of Good or Evil, Happiness or Misery. Indeed, all the Happiness or Misery of this present Time is not to be accounted of; for whatever delights or vexes, soon passeth away, and we are gone: It is transitory and in continual hasting by; but seeing that further we are to receive for the things done in the Body, whether good or evil, the Reward of one, and Punishment of the other must indeed make eternally happy or miserable. We ought to take the utmost Heed, least by declining what may seem a little harsh or laborious what may render liable to a small suffering or Shame, we do hereby lose the Recompence of Reward. So again, by giving Way to the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, or the present Profit of Unrighteousness, we may plunge our selves into eternal Pain and Loss. The Pleasures of Sin do not truly content at the very Moment, when there is a real and sensible Delight in receiving

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the things of God according to his Laws and prescribed Rules. So in the Gains of Wrong and Injustice, in taking Bribes or undue Rewards, he may be a little pleased for a while, yet there is Regret and Fear, the one for what is already done, and the other for what is to come. So that whatever Plenty or Abundance the unjust Man hath, yet his State and Condition is not comparable to the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness, to that Man who observes the true and strict Rules thereof, and hath only the Blessing and Increase of his honest Labour and Diligence.

Sin and Disobedience will not admit of a through Consideration, but must go on with Hurry and Neglect; whereas Obedience and Righteousness will *prove its own Work, and find a rejoycing therein*, Gal. 6. 4. It desires the most particular Thought and Examination, and still it hath sincere Comfort and a blessed Hope and Assurance. Even those, who do not act by a Sense of Duty towards God, are led by present Pleasure, Profit, Convenience or Advantage. And were they alike perswaded, that there was more abundantly to be had in the Ways of God, these same Persons would be moved to walk therein. Reduce all things to a Man's self, his own Good and Happiness: This, though it be somewhat further about, and it is not altogether upon so noble and excellent a Principle, yet it may bring him over unto good. But the right and direct Way is for a Man to give up himself to God in the first Place sincerely and unfeignedly resolving to live in Obedience and Duty unto him in all things, come what will thereof, and trust wholly unto God for the Event of all things;

for thus one may keep whole and ſtedfaſt in his Covenant, and not turn aſide from his Commandments to the right hand or to the left. He may go through with and underſtand thoſe doubtful Diſpenſations of Providence which are therefore given to exerciſe our Faith and Truſt on him at all times. To hold on ſtill in every Affliction, Trouble or Diſappointment, being aſſured however croſs or contrary they may ſeem at preſent, yet we know that *All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his Purpoſe*, Rom. 8. 28. Whereas thoſe who ſeek their own good directly and immediately in the firſt place, and have more reſpect unto that than to the Glory and Law of God, they are apt to miſtake ſudden Eaſe and Pleaſure, or preſent Conveniency for real Good, and to meaſure their Obligations and Rules of Duty by what ſeems to make for or againſt that. If they imagine the thing may expoſe them to Danger and Trouble, then it is asked, Doth the Lord require it of them? And they will find out a Deluſion, or conceit to themſelves that he doth not, or they would willingly be excuſed, nay, ſome run into that Danger and common Error, ſeeing that the Lord hath commanded all his Commandments for our good always; they think ſuch an Inſtance is not for their good, and from thence they would conclude that it is none of God's Commandments. The Errour lies in their own Mind and wrong Imagination; for the thing is true as God hath eſtabliſhed it; Whatſoever he hath commanded is for our preſent Peace and Comfort and future Recompence. But many through want of

Knowledge, Faith, and Truſt on God, do not diſcern it is ſo. Certainly preſent Peace and future Glory is much beyond the utmoſt good that was ever had by Sin and Tranſgreſſion. The firſt is ſenſible, and of the other we have aſſured Hope and Evidence from the ſame God whom it is impoſſible to love, and even now gives us the things which we taſte, ſee, handle, and enjoy. Such Food is nevertheleſs good and wholeſome though a ſick Stomach cannot reliſh it ſo; but it may ſeem to that evil and bitter. And when by Reaſon of Iniquity the *whole Head is ſick and the whole Heart is faint*, then it cannot ſo clearly apprehend and perceive the Sweet and Goodneſs of Obedience and Duty. The things are nevertheleſs real and the very ſame though Blindneſs doth not ſee them, and Ignorance doth not know them. And ſo it is of the whole divine Will and Commandment, which is excellent and Profitable. *Her Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths are Peace*, Pro. 3. 17. Albeit, thoſe who are alienated from the Life of God do not throughly conceive how it is ſo.

It was God who put this Goodneſs into things, for that is the Return made upon the ſeveral days Work of the Creation, *And God ſaw that it was good*, Gen. 1, 12. ſo it was in their original Nature, and ſo it is in their further Eſtabliſhment and Order; for they are Derivations from his own Eſſence, God, who is infinitely good, cannot make any thing but what good is. Thus it is as to all his Works and Doings. He cannot command any thing but what is alſo good.

Indeed, through the Intermixture of Sin and Evil, which came in afterwards, there may be

Trouble and Resistance: Through the Wiles and Hindrances of Satan, and the Powers of Darkness, there may be Care and Vexation; but to avoid and overcome is Joy and Glory. To countermine and resolutely go on still, to behold Satan falling from Heaven as Lightning, and to have the Spirits subject unto us, Here is exceeding Triumph and praising God on this Behalf. Our Nature loves to have Opposition, and rejoyces to get over it. The utmost here is but the like Pain and Trouble, which others willingly undergo for the things of this World, and they are contented, though they act upon Uncertainty and Expectation; and if they should at length obtain, yet they cannot keep but must be taken away from it. But for the good things God hath promised, the Way to come at them is chalked out in his Word, and shewed in our Mind. And we know when we do accordingly, as plainly as when a Master commands his Servant to go, he heareth his Voice and goeth accordingly. There is alike and greater Comfort of Mind in doing the Will of God as a Man hath when he returneth from his daily Work in the Evening. And there is the full Assurance of Faith and Hope unto the End, as when one hath done something more towards it, and expects to see an End, and enjoy the Fruits of his Labours.

The present Acts are little and sudden; but the good and evil are more remote and distant, yet assuredly consequent to them. This will render either happy or miserable; and as the several Actions will do this more or less, so they are to be desired or avoided. Is such a thing for our present Happiness or Misery, which is for a Moment? But how

how ſtands it as to our future Happineſs or Miſery, which is exceeding and eternal, And this ſhould chiefly ſway and determine us in whatever we take in hand, knowing that the Time to come will be equally preſent and remain longer before us, than this Moment in which we now live. The leſs Concern muſt give way to the greater. Eternity is to be preferred before Time; for our ſelf is as nearly concerned in one as in the other.

The Commandments of God are ſaid to be *for our good always*, even now, henceforth, and for ever and ever. The good which is now only in Beginning doth increaſe, till it aſcends up into eternal Life and Bleſſedneſs. But as to the Neglect and Violation of them, the utmoſt pretended Benefit thereof is only a ſudden Conveniency or momentary Sweetneſs, which ſoon endeth in Regret of Bitterneſs; and unleſs God's Mercy and our own Repentance doth interpoſe, it renders us liable unto endleſs Pain and Puniſhment. In Obedience and Righteouſneſs there is even at this preſent Time a ſenſible Comfort, Joy and Peace. Now what more can be deſired in this World? What is more valuable than *perfect Peace*? Or that full Aſſurance and Stayedneſs of Mind, which is contented with the preſent, but withal deſires after better and greater things to come. Even now to delight in God, and to pant and thirſt after a more full and cloſe Enjoyment of him. To walk with Chearfulneſs and Pleaſure in the Way of his Commandments. To have a further hungring after Righteouſneſs, but yet a moſt earneſt coveting after the heavenly Reward and Bleſſedneſs. To take with a quiet Mind all the ſeveral Diſpenſati-

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ons and kinds of Providence, holding our Faith and truſt ſtill. *I will hope yet continually, and praiſe thee yet more and more.* To magnifie and bleſs God ſtill, when things ſeem contrary; for there will yet be a right and an expected End. *Although the Fig-Tree ſhall not bloſſom, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation,* Hab. 3. 18. The apprehenſion of him above, makes all things here below ſweet, and the worſt, ſuch as may be endured: For God will in the mean time give ſtrength to bear, and aſſured deliverance out of it.

By this may be ſeen the weakneſs of our condition, that we are ſo very fearful of every Evil that can, or we imagine may do us the leaſt hurt. And alſo there is a ſenſe of our want and imperfection, of our poor and low Eſtate, that we are ſo greedy, and catching after every ſmall thing which we think may do good, or pleaſe us a little. We are lovers of our ſelves, and conſult only for our ſelves, more than what the Lord our God doth require of us. Now indeed, ſelf-love is not to be blamed, for it is the great Law of Nature, and was undoubtedly implanted in us by the Author thereof. No Man hateth his own Fleſh, but loves and cheriſheth it. But the Error and Miſtake is, That we do ſnatch at the Leſſer Good, inſtead of the greater; and ſo by declining, and avoiding a leſs Evil; we run upon a greater, and ſubject our ſelves to more loſs. We do not in the firſt place ſeek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and truſt that all theſe things ſhall be added unto us. Nor do we obſerve our Duty to him in all things, and depend upon him for the Event of all. We are to ſeek after a true, proper, and enduring Happineſs;

neſs; and conſequently, to do, and embrace every thing which makes for that, and decline what is contrary, or an hindrance.

In every thing we take in hand, remember the End, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs; and at preſent examine as to each ſingle Action we are ingaged in, Whether the Good or Evil conſequent to us thereby will be greater? Taking in the conſideration of the future, as well as of the time that now is. For that is as much longer, and of greater concern, as Eternity doth exceed Time, which is more than our whole Life is to the twinkling of an Eye, and conſequently deſerves ſo much the greater regard and concern, even of thoſe things which are done out of Humour, Oppoſition, Luſt or Pleaſure, the ſuppoſed good or conveniency inſtantly paſſeth away, but the danger and evil is great, for by *Reaſon of theſe things the wrath of God cometh on the children of Diſobedience.* The pain and puniſhment will more than ſufficiently requite for gratifying their own will and concupiſcence. Though they hug themſelves, and they walk in the falſe peace and imagination of their Heart, yet a day of Recompence will aſſuredly come, when it ſhall be rendred unto them for all the ſweet and pleaſure of their Sin and Tranſgreſſion. So on the other hand, all the ſeeming trouble, or loſs of Obedience and Righteouſneſs, ſhall be recompenced with a proportionable Reward. As for thoſe who go on in a more blind hurry and neglect, their Time and Life paſſeth away, and Satan thus deceiveth them into Ruine and Perdition. This ſhort Queſtion might be ſtill put to our Souls, and ſhould ever

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be in our Mind, What do I propose to my self? What Good will come of it? Is such a Profit or Pleasure to be attained? Why, the like hath been had already, it satisfieth not at the very time, it quickly palleth away, and comes to an utter end. But if it is the effect of Disobedience and Transgression; why, This hath a just Recompence of Reward annexed to it, which will be bitterness in the End, and a severe compensation for whatever unlawful delight or gain he hath had. As the several steps to a Journey, so the single and several Actions of our Life tend unto Happiness or Misery; they do either set forward the one, or make liable unto the other. It is a *laying in a good foundation against the time to come*, or a *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*. Who would commit sin if he did consider that he should receive doubly for it? When there is no fruit at the time, and certain punishment to come. And so, who would not go on, and continue in all Duty, seeing that he shall have assuredly such encouragement and reward?

Every one proposes to himself Happiness and Good as the End of his Actions; but he would do well to take heed whether he doth endeavour after a true and enduring Happiness, instead of a seeming and sudden conveniency? Whether he can discern what is really good and profitable all the days of his vain Life which he spendeth upon Earth as a shadow? And not confine himself only to those Actions which perish in the using, and it would be better if they had never been done. All the pretended advantage of them is soon over, the guilt remains, but the worst is to come, *viz.*

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To suffer the due Reward of their deeds. If the punishments were presently annexed to sin and wickedness, all would refrain from it, as many do from Religion and Duty, because they imagine it harsh and irksome. But because the little and insipid pleasure of sin is present, and the pain to come; they greedily catch at the first, and blindly and ignorantly venture upon the other.

What is to come, is not as yet, but it will as certainly be, and also remain, when all these things are passed away. *The World passeth away, and the fashion thereof*, both the lust and trouble therein. The first is only an husk, shell, or an appearance of Happiness, so is the other of Misery; nay, all here is but as Imagery and Varnish, and meer Out-side. *Surely every Man walketh in a vain shew*, Psal. 39. 6. In the Margent there it is, *In an Image*. Our Bodies are as shadows, our Souls little more than nothing. *Surely every Man in his best estate is altogether vanity.* And yet this is fleeting and hasteth away; day after day, and night after night, our Time passeth, and our flesh waxes old, as doth a garment. Nothing here doth remain, or endure with us; and yet we covet, and earnestly desire after what is so. Indeed if we were to pass by, and to be no more for ever, then we should make the most of these temporal and perishing Things; but seeing they are in order to what is Eternal and Enduring, we should so use and manage our selves towards these earthly and temporal Things, that we may come to the Enjoyment and Possession of the Heavenly and Eternal; so to approve our selves in the time of Trial, that we may have the acceptation of our

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God; to be *as obedient Children*, that he may give unto us the Heavenly Portion and Inheritance; so to demean our selves here in Time, that we may attain unto a Blessed Eternity. God, who established and ordained all things as they are, sent us here to prove what is in our heart, and what we will do; He hath set different things before us, to see what we will choose; He hath afforded us the means and capacity of Knowledge, if we would but learn and know; if we would *Obey the Lord our God, and walk in all his ways*, and rely upon that gracious Promise, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my People*, Jer. 7. 23. He will so order, dispose, and give us things, as shall tend to our comfortable Being here, our Crown and Glory, the utmost and continual Rejoycing hereafter.

If we can be happy at last, and for evermore, that is all which we desire; if we can pass on, and go through this World, we are contented to suffer Labour and Weariness, knowing that we shall come to the Rest which the Lord hath promised: And that will be more sweet and refreshing, the more pain and difficulty we have sustained in these few and evil days of our Pilgrimage. If they were good and pleasant, they sensibly fly away as a Post, and it is melancholy and regret to find, that what delights should pass away. It is yet more anguish and sorrow, that it must be at length wholly determined, and come to an utter End. It is the utmost Despair, and inexpressible Vexation, That for the unlawful use of those good things he had in this Life, he must, when that is ended, come to the Place where he shall

shall be tormented. But now, on the other hand, to *Rest from their Labours*, to be *comforted for the evil things they had here*, this indeed is the Great and True Blessedness.

This should teach us to use the things of this World as if we used them not; but above all, carefully to observe every tittle and part of our Duty, to abstain from all appearance of Evil, for it may be all continually done from time to time, with a very little irksomness, trouble and loss, and there is a most happy End of all. This third time citing that place, is the more to enforce the observance thereof, *Blessed are they that keep Judgment; and he that doth Righteousness at all times*, Psa. 106. 3. *In keeping of them there is great Reward*, Psa. 19. 11. The word, *keep*, denotes a constant adhering to them, come what will thereof. Who is resolved with full purpose of Heart to cleave unto God, and to observe all his Statutes, notwithstanding any Temptation, Difficulty, or Hindrance to the contrary. The Temptation may be overcome, for it might indeed please a little, but that would be sudden at the Time, and unsatisfactory in the Conclusion thereof, and consequently, the not yielding to it, can be no great loss or misery. But then is a content and approbation of Mind afterwards, and also the vast consideration of the time to come: Also, the difficulty may be conquered, and the hindrance taken away, without much trouble or pain, without diminution or lessening of present Happiness; but it exceedingly furthers as to the Future and Eternal Blessedness.

If it was throughly inculcated, and continually

repeated upon our mind, How that the best things which happen here will not make us happy, nor the worst miserable; If we had a right knowledge of all things in their own nature, not heightned in Imagination, we might easily go through all parts of Duty, and avoid the several Instances and Acts of Sin, as the one doth occur, and the other present themselves. Indeed such a thing being the Will and Mind of God, should presently silence all other considerations drawn from selfishness, or the love of our selves. But (as was before somewhat hinted) to shut out all boasting and merit, *That the Lord alone may be exalted in that day*, we do little or nothing purely for him, but all out of respect had to our selves; and if we were sufficiently convinced, it would as much redound to our own good and benefit, we would then obey the Lord our God, and walk in all his ways. This is evident, For the very reason why People walk in their own ways, is, because of the supposed advantage and conveniency thereof. Now alike, and greater Profit would turn them into the right way. *Present Peace*, and *Future Glory*, do surmount all the Pleasure and Profit which can be had here; and *Glory* and *Immortality* are rather to be sought after, than blind dangerous inconsideration, or the fearful expectation of the end of those things which is Death. It is better to sin not, and be innocent, than to give way unto the doing of those things whereof we must give account; for hence arises doubt and fear. We may quickly find and perceive the utmost good and delight, which spring up from Disobedience and Transgression; the same hath been had before. *It melts away like dross, leaving*

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ing a foulneſs behind, which turns into nothing. This may be obſerved of the ſeveral Acts of Sin and Temptation; which go out like the ſnuff of a Candle in noiſom darkneſs. How can men expect Happineſs from thoſe things by which they die and become miſerable? *What Fruit had ye then in thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed?* It is all but traſh, which inſtantly periſhes in the going down, and doth not nouriſh; which is as inſignificant as a mere Tale that is told, or expires as a *Dream when one awaketh*; which is but faint and languiſhing in the Act, and bitter in the Remembrance.

If there was previous Thought and Conſideration of theſe Things, Men would not ſo much yield to them. But alas! They diſcern it moſt commonly by the Effects and Conſequents; and that not throughly, till it is too late. When the time of Tryal is over, then they know how they ſhould behave themſelves; and when he will prove them no longer, then they would approve themſelves unto God. The Matter is underſtood at the End, but not at the beginning; whereas this is too late if it is but once laid before us, as ſuch are the concernments of Eternity. We being proved in this Life only, but many other Things of this Life are often and ſucceſſively laid before us; and this ſhould teach us to amend our former Errors, and carry our ſelves Right at the next Opportunity and Trial. To have the free uſe of our Reaſon and Faculties, and our Senſes continually exerciſed to diſcern between Good and Evil, That we may ſeek after and embrace all that can be had of the one, and as ſtudiouſly decline all the hurt and defilements of the other. To know and practice all thoſe things for which we ſhall have the Voice of our Lord, *Well done good and faithful Servant*: And again, carefully avoid and leave undone all thoſe things which tend to ſad account and condemnation. *What profit is there of all the Labour that a Man taketh under the Sun?* In Truth none at all; unleſs it be in order to future Life. And when we come to fully know and perceive as much, We ſhould direct all our Actions accordingly. That like as the Men of this

present Time do think in whatever they take in hand, What Good or Profit will accrue to my self hereby? So the same may be continually thought of as to the time to come. What advantage or stead will this Thing stand me in when I shall come to give account of my self to God? The consideration of Things to come, by reason of their so much exceeding Greatness and Duration, should swallow up all the care and concern of this present Time. We do not so much value how things go with us now, so it may be well with us hereafter. We are not so much concerned for whatever we may miss of in this Time and Place, so we may lay hold of Eternal Life. It is no matter whatever Trouble, Pain, or Striving we endure, if *we may by any means attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead.* And then, we should not so much Article for Happiness or Misery in the mean while, if we did look out to this vast and enduring State. Lord Jesus give me a Portion and Interest in That, and dispose of all other things with me as thou pleasest in the mean while. Nothing here can be properly called Happiness or Misery; for it may be rather termed a transient Delight, or small Vexation, which as the shadow upon the top or surface of the Earth, presently hasteth by; it may slightly affect the Imagination, or uppermost Thought; but it should not reach, nor descend into the depth of the Heart; for that should take Thought of greater Things than what are to be had here: Or rather consider the Disposal and Establishment of them, and so likewise use them in subordination to things to come, Even according to the Law and Direction of the Most High God, and by observing the Commandments and Sayings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Good God! what abundant Exhortation is there to this? How many Repetitions, Inculcations and Inforcements must there be, only to do what a Subject doth readily for his Prince, a Child for his Parent, and a Servant for his Master. Is not God, and his Son Jesus Christ, greater and better to us, than any of these Relations? Shall we not get as much by his Service as by theirs?

theirs? *Are not his Promiſes as ſure?* And doth not his Reward extend further? Is not his Work as excellent? And the things he hath ſaid as good and fit to be done? Yea, they are more agreeable and reaſonable than any thing we now do in this World. *His Commandments are not grievous*, but ſuch as may be performed, and there is a greater Benefit annexed to the doing of them than is to be had in the moſt generous and highly eſteemed Actions according to the World. For beſides many other Diſadvantages, whatever is done here in order to the things here, is certainly and evidently determined within this ſhort Time; but for thoſe who ſhall do the Will of God, it is not yet known what their Recompence ſhall be. It is higher than the Heavens and reaches even to the Length of Eternity. It is revealed unto us in great and marvellous Words ſufficient to raiſe our utmoſt Affection, Deſire and Endeavour. But we are further aſſured from *Iſa.* 64. 4. that it is yet more than we can now expect or conceive, *For the Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father with his Angels, and then he ſhall reward every Man according to his Works*, Mat. 16. 27. This is told us before that we may prepare and fit our Works accordingly; that we may have a greater Meaſure and of the beſt Sort of Works, ſo we may know what we have to do, and alſo be diligent in the Exerciſe thereof. Firſt, not to ſpend our Money for that which is not Bread, nor yet our Labour for that which ſatisfieth not: Not to be only or principally buſied about vain and periſhing Things; which it is impoſſible they ſhould content or make happy, for they do not remain. To draw off from the things of this World, and to employ our Care and Labour about the things to come. And then we are to ſearch the Scriptures that we may underſtand rightly how we may have eternal Life, and put in through God's gracious Promiſes for the different Degrees of Glory, even according as we have more or leſs abounded in the Work of the Lord; ſo that we ſhould not be ſo much concerned how much Happineſs we ſhall have in this mean while, or what Miſery we are liable unto; but ſtill give heed and take care for that which is to come.

As the future Life ſucceeds and is annexed to this preſent Life, ſo we ſhould not think of one without the other. For that is the general Fault and Miſtake, that we are ſo ſunk and confined within this Life that we have no conſtant Regard to that Life which is to come. We do wholly conſult for the preſent, to the Neglect and Unmindfulneſs of the future: Whereas if Conſideration be taken of both together, then we ſhall manage things rightly: And when there is any Contrariety and Competition between them, there always Preference ought to be had to the greater, for more Concern ought to be had for a Year than for a Minute only. The Diſproportion is much more in all the ſeveral Inſtances between the things of this Life and the other. Albeit, they are now at this preſent Time had or ſeen: And the others are future, to be expected and beleived. But yet theſe things ſhall be paſt and utterly done away, when the others ſhall ever remain, It is evident we muſt all be taken away from the things of this World, and then the whole Action and Buſineſs of our Life will ſeem and ſignifie no more than of the paſt Time already, as to which, how that is we can conceive in our Mind. But then comes Judgment, when thoſe Thoughts, Words and Actions, which are over and almoſt forgotten, ſhall come to be examined and Diſtribution ſhall be made accordingly.

Then the Diſguizes and contrary Appearances of things ſhall be pulled off, and they ſhall be ſeen and underſtood in their true Nature. What do contribute to our Welfare, and what do tend to our Hurt, and this is to be meaſured, not according to falſe Thought or wrong Apprehenſion, but from the very Reality and Event of things. And again, Judgment is to be made, not ſo much from the firſt ſeeming contrary or middle Iſſue, but from the utmoſt and laſt End of things, for Satan may at firſt endeavour to defeat, but he can never overthrow it; ſo he may try to turn it into Harm and Inconvenience, but yet cannot poſſibly hinder ſo far that it ſhall not do us good at the latter End.

The

The Purpoſe of God ſtand firm, and he will certainly bring it to paſs, though in the mean while, through the Wiles and Oppoſition of Satan, ſome things may ſeem to let and hinder it: And they may at firſt ſeem to bring the contrary to what they ſhall end in at the laſt. When God promiſes, *I will deliver him and Honour him, with long Life will I ſatisfie him and ſhew him my Salvation*, Pſal. 91. 15, 16. He may at firſt ſeem to be delivered over to the Will of his Enemies, and be overwhelmed with Shame: He may do thoſe things, which in common Probability will endanger and ſhorten his Life, and to be eſteemed ſmitten of God and forſaken; ſo that he hath not then ſo full and clear a Diſcovery of the divine Will and Counſel. Now if we had Faith, Knowledge and Patience, as to believe, diſcern and quietly expect as much, then we might eaſily in the mean while ſubmit to Hardſhip, Inconvenience and Diſappointment, knowing aſſuredly that that there will be an expected End. And by this doing we ſhall lay in more Stock and Foundation for our real and enduring Happineſs, whilſt we continually ſtudy and labour that we may be accepted of and approved by God, but neglect or diſregard the Pain or Pleaſure of the preſent, but refer all to future and endleſs Life. *Whilſt we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen, for the things which are ſeen, are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal.* The firſt indeed are felt, we being now in the midſt of them; and we ſenſibly know that they are little, vain, and haſtily paſſing away; for they are either taken from us, or we from them: So they are but temporal. But to the other we daily approach nearer, we now apprehend them by Faith and Reaſon; and bleſſed is he that ſeeks diligently, for there ſhall be a certain Performance and obtaining of them.

It is the eaſieſt thing in the World to be underſtood and moſt reaſonable to be practiſed, that the leſs ſhould give way to the greater, and we ſhould be moſt concerned about that which is of moſt Importance to every one of us. And hereupon the things of God and our Univerſal

Duty to him, have the Preference infinitely before all other things whatever. For conceive what is moſt highly eſteemed or ſought after amongſt Men. The higheſt Honour, greateſt Riches, or the moſt valuable Pleaſures cannot hold the leaſt Competition with that Exaltation which we expect from our God, the Inheritance that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for us, and that Fulneſs of Joy and the Pleaſures which are at God's Right Hand for evermore.

God firſt gives things in a leſſer Degree for our Trial; and then afterwards he adds that which is full and perfect for our Crown and Reward. That by the lawful Uſe of the things which he hath allowed we may be contented, and quietly wait ſtill we ſhall be made moſt happy at laſt. There is a wanting of ſomewhat at preſent to prove whether we will reach after ſomewhat more in Luſt or forbidden things, there is a little Conſciouſneſs of Want as well as an Appearance of Good, whereon to ground the Temptation and Trial. There is an haſty Deſire and coveting which coveting which craves to be ſatisfied, which by giving way unto, is yet more urgent, as contrariwiſe it diminiſhes and ceaſes by Denial and croſſing of it. If we did throughly conſider how little there is in thoſe things when had, as alſo how ſmall Pain and Irkſomeneſs it is, when they are reſolutely denied: We ſhould more conſtantly keep within the Tenour and Bounds of Chriſtian Sobriety.

We are now to receive things to the very full, for we are not as yet to come to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb, nor to the Feaſt of fat things upon the Lees well refined: Neither ſhould we here expect a tarrying or ſitting dow; *For we are not as yet come to the Reſt which the Lord our God hath promiſed.* We muſt be content to be fed with Tears and Sorrow, having Hope and Expectation to come to that Place where they ſhall be done away. If God doth at preſent *Give us Tears in great Meaſure*, he will at length make it up in as large a Cup of Conſolation and Rejoycing.

Theſe

These three make up our Condition here, *Sorrow, Joy, or Contentedness between them both*, and in one or the other, we pass all the Days of our Pilgrimage. The last is most desirable, for its Constancy and Duration, for though we eagerly covet after Mirth and Delight, yet mirth wearisome if had long together; as also Grief, if it is continually upon us, it sinks down the Soul. Now indeed the Worst may be born and submitted unto, if it be in order to good things to come. *If we sow in Tears, so that we may reap in Joy*; if we go on in our Way weeping so that we may come again rejoycing and bringing our Sheaves with us. *Here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints*: Here seems to be the great Trial and Exercise of Mankind; because they forego the good things of this Life, and subject themselves unto the evil; they take up the Cross here when as yet they do not see any thing more. They are not indubitably certain to the contrary; for often such a Staggering or Doubt doth return, that here is their All, that after this Space they shall be no more for ever: And therefore some think that if they are bereaved of this, they are absolutely deprived of all. Or what is to succeed hereafter; They say, That is of doubtful Expectation; or If it is in a more particular Manner at God's Disposal, then he may with-hold his Hand and not seem to grant as he doth here. So that to renounce a Certainty for an Uncertainty, to expose himself to present and sensible Labour and Pain (when it may be declined) only for future and conceived Rest and Refreshing, this doth not seem reconcileable with the Wisdom of this world. But the Apostle saith, *That the Wisdom of this World comes to nought*, 1 Cor. 2. 6. so likewise all this may be answered from the true Dictates of Wisdom, and by reducing all to our selves. For it is evident that if we had all the good things of this Time, and we did both say, and also put in practice, *Soul, eat, drink and be merry, for thou hast Goods laid up for many Years*; yet all these will be expired and gone as the past Days already are. And what is the result of all? What do they signifie at last?

That

That can be no Happiness which hath an End. And seeing that we have immortal Souls and returning Bodies, as our Maker and Creator hath told and assured us, We must, or should have something to stand in stead when all these shall fail. It can be no loss to miss of these things; for if had, yet they certainly perish, and come to nothing, and we die and go away utterly from them. Now if we were to be no more for ever, it would be almost the same thing, if we did appear here for a longer or shorter Space, seeing that at length it must be utterly determined, and come to an utter End. *Remember how short my Time is, wherefore hast thou made all Men in vain?* What great difference is between a quick, or more slow motion? When each passeth by, and is gone for ever. Wherefore came I forth into Light, to know Vanity, Sorrow, and Evil, nay, it seems better, the less abode we make with them. It is well that it passeth, and we must be taken away from it, or we should be wearied therewith.

Even this Knowledge and Tiresomeness doth point out something more; for this is the *earnest Expectation of the Creature*: Which must be after something more, and also more excellent than what is had here. It hath likewise some, though an imperfect Apprehension thereof; otherwise there could be no Desire and Waiting. Thus is enforced that Exhortation of our Saviour in *Mat.*6. from *Vers.* 26. to the End. *Therefore take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, is not the Life more than Meat*; and so in *V.* 32. it is inculcated, for after all these things do the *Gentiles* seek. They know nothing more, no do they discern much more in Life than Meat, Drink and Raiment just to receive and use these things and rise up to play. But *seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, for that is more and of longer Concern, and this Life and the things thereof is only in order to that. A Space only to prove and see whether we will therein seek after Immortality and Glory. *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* It brings more Evil than Good; so

ſo it is not deſirable to live only for living ſake, but to do the Work which the Lord hath ſent us here to do.

And yet ſuch is the falſe and contrary Practice of Worldlings, that they are more concerned how it goes with this Moment and Inch of Time, than how it ſhall be with them throughout the whole Length of Eternity. They are wonderfully careful and afraid of loſing a little Good, and ſuffering ſome ſmall Evil at the preſent Time, then they are fearful leaſt they come ſhort of the true and enduring Bleſſedneſs, and leaſt they fall into the Damnation of Hell. What means that greedy and earneſt catching at all the Pleaſure or Profit that can be had, and running away from all manner of Evil, without regard to the Means, whether they be ſinful or not? This is no Conſideration, or at leaſt no Hindrance to the doing as they liſt. Like natural Brute Beaſts, they are only mindful of what is juſt before them; but regardleſs of what is to ſucceed. They act perverſely, and go juſt contrary to the Command and Counſel of our Lord and Saviour, for they take thought for to morrow, and think themſelves never ſufficiently diligent in making Preparation for the Reſidue of this Life, and how it ſhall go with them in the few remaining Days, but they do not ſtretch their Care ond Proviſion further, not giving Heed to be received up into the heavenly Kingdom when all theſe things ſhall fail. Nor do they learn and practiſe the Righteouſneſs thereof, which would ſtand in ſtead: Whereas Meat, Drink and Raiment are for the Body; but this Body ſhall at length drop from them, and they ſhall have no need thereof.

One would admire how it comes to paſs that ſo much Time and Labour are ſpent about the things of this Life, as uſually is: When the Meat and Drink are ſoon received, and the Raiment is quickly put on: So that there is Time to ſpare to mind other things, but they do as it were procraſtinate and lengthen it out of ſet Purpoſe. They ſeek out for ſuperfluous and more than neceſſary things, and hope to have this for an Excuſe for not minding the one thing needful. Nay, who have thoſe outward things without their own Care and Labour, and

have

have them brought to their Hand; yet these do rather consume their precious Time in Sloth or sinful Pleasures, or hungry Recreations, or vain things. But they are not employed in the Work of the Lord, nor do they seek after the *Pleasures of his House*; nor yet do they contemplate and seek to get an Interest in the *Substance of the things hoped for*, which only are true and enduring. They have some Fancy or seeming Reason for their present Manner of Life. It hath a Shew of Pleasure, Ease and Quietness; but the Christian Course seems to them to meet with Opposition, Trouble, Hardship, and Disturbance. Whereas the former sensibly comes to nothing, and to the other is promised a great Reward and an exceeding Weight of Glory. But even now the idle or sinful Life is vexatious or tiresome: It is accompanied with Restlesness and Dissatisfaction; for the Mind of Man covets after something more, and also hath Regret when he is not conversant about what he ought. The Mind soars up above these lower things, and though kept down or turned aside thro' the Policy and Deceivableness of Satan, yet it is with Pain and Displeasure. Those many silent Thoughts and Upbraidings of Spirit, that self-Indignation, the continual Fear and Doubt of Mind, as often as it considers of God above, or casts a Glimpse towards Eternity and future Life, there is Horror and strange Amazement. Every one, nay the Worst Sinner or prophane Person doth sometimes think of these things: And even who is most sunk into Earthliness or Ignorance, his Life is continual Weariness and Vexation. And they are willingly more cumbred with the things of this Life. They do of set Purpose give way to it and consume the greater Part of their Time herein. Because worldly Business is a Diversion from that Sorrow and Fear of Soul which they would otherwise labour under. If we could bring out the several Things and Passages of their Life we should discover the manifold Misery of Ungodliness and Disobedience even at this present Time, besides the *Wrath of God*, which is now revealed from Heaven, and shall be executed upon the Guilty when the Lord cometh with Ten Thousand of his Saints.

But

But on the other Hand, in the ſeveral Steps of the Chriſtian Warfare there is Contentedneſs, Peace, Hope and Aſſurance. It hath the Strength and Comfort of God at preſent, and alſo Application of the Promiſes, which ſhall be made good and fulfilled hereafter.

The utmoſt that can be done in this vain Life, which paſſeth away as a Shadow, is but little; and if we can poſſibly do any thing for which we may have the Acceptance of our God, and obtain Good at the latter End, it is highly worth our greateſt Pains and Labour. As it is better to have it hereafter than now at preſent; for (as hath been heretofore often obſerved) every thing had now, doth paſs away, but what is to be revealed hereafter, doth ever remain. Certainly they have the beſt Portion, and make the wiſeſt Choice, who are for the greater and more durable things, who let the Shadow paſs by, but make ſure of the Subſtance; who are contented to foregoe ſome things, which may endanger or leſſen from their heavenly Inheritance. Nay, if it be ſtrictly and properly conſidered, there is no great Loſs or Suffering in this; for though the Means may be ſomewhat diminiſhed or taken away, yet our God, through his gracious and and bountiful Nature, by his wonderful and over-ruling Providence doth ſupply what is wanting; and he doth nevertheleſs give the thing it ſelf, for which the others are eſteemed neceſſary and ſought after. Such things are deſired in order to Contentment and preſent Happineſs; and again, we decline others, leſt they ſhould bring on Evil and Miſery. Now God (who maketh all things to work together for Good, to them that love and fear him) can, and alſo doth give the ſame Contentment without them; and alſo takes away, or ſoftens the pain, when the nature of ſuch a thing would inflict it.

And further, When we are in the way of certain Duty we have ſtrong Conſolation and Approbation of Mind, as we may know by the direction of God's Word, and ſenſibly by the Law written in our own Hearts. But hereby we may know if we do thoſe Things that are not required

required, if they have no plain Footstep or Warrant from the Word; as also, there is a weariness and doubt of Soul. A Man may run out of Breath in a wrong Road, or in a blind furious Zeal, but in keeping close and diligent to the Lines of known Duty, there God gives Grace and Glory; the first to enable, and the other for Encouragement and Recompence. *And no good thing will he with-hold from them*, that always act obediently to his Will. Indeed we may grow weary in Well-doing, through some Unbelief, or Distrust of the after Recompence; and also at present we may somewhat fail, and be discouraged in our Mind, for want of that Success and Event to our Labours, which we did before expect and desire for. But we are only to put forth his Grace, and use all the outward means, and then commit the thing to God, that he may bring it to pass. We may Plant or Water, but then we should Pray, and leave it to God to give the Increase. *Neither is he that Planteth any thing, nor he that Watereth, but God that giveth the Increase*, 1 Cor. 3. 7. He suffereth us, as it were, to labour in vain, and to spend our Strength for nought, and in vain, that he may cut off all occasion of boasting from our selves, that we should not ascribe to our selves in any thing as if we did it.

We do greatly err and mistake, in reckoning upon Things being done more suddenly than they are; for in Planting and Watering, the growth and fruit are by degrees; nay, it first rots, and sinks deeper, before it rises up to springing and increase. It may seem quite lost and perished, until it appears forth visible and great. *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters, for thou shalt find it after many days*, Eccles. 11. 1. But in the mean while there may be sorrow, vexation, and murmuring for fear and distrust, lest there should no good come of it. God sees all things at once, and knows the Things which are not yet, but will be; he speaks of them before they are, yea, and declares them whilest they are yet springing forth. He doth give us gracious Promises and Assurance, That there

there shall be a blessed Effect at last, upon which we may even now Hope and Rely; notwithstanding contrary things do happen, which may even tempt us to cast away our confidence, unless we were foretold by him, whom we have all Reason to believe, *That it hath a great Recompence of Reward.* We do hardly guess aright at the things before us, as to the very nature and reason of them; but we know not at all of the things to come; for most commonly they happen contrary, but always otherwise than we did at first imagine. And whilest we swell up big and high in expectation, the vexation is yet greater by a Disappointment. There are many things in common Life, but much more in a Christian Course, which raise the different Affections of Joy and Sorrow, which make us now to be *lifted up*, and then *cast down*, Psal. 102. 10. But between both extreams, and variety of condition, we may rub through, and go on still, we may have respect unto all God's Statutes, observing all manner of Duty, and avoid all sin of Omission or Commission, and submit to our God for the Event of all. Whatever pain, doubt, fear, sorrow, or any other manner of Evil we may meet with, yet all is such that a Man armed with Grace may endure. *For God will suffer none to be tempted above that he is able. Now for a season (if need be) ye are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations, That the trial of your Faith being more precious than of Gold that perisheth, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ,* 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. And so contrariwise, whatever Comfort or Good we shall receive at any time, we are to thank our God for it, and to go on more chearfully and diligently in all Righteousness.

This is the way to Happiness, which will be sooner thus attained, than it can be had in pleasure or profit, pride or humour, in activity about unnecessary things, or by giving way to sloth and ease. And because the Reward shall be answerable, and proportioned to the work, use thy

thy utmoſt diligence in the mean while to abound more in well-doing, and lay up for thy ſelf a greater degree and foundation of good Works, againſt the time to come. Caſt about, and conſider throughly in thy mind, which way thou ſhalt moſt glorifie God, and do good to Mankind. And when thou haſt found out, or art directed in the right manner, then ariſe up, and be doing thereafter. Remember that thou doſt ſerve and labour for thy God, *Whoſe Reward is with him, and his Work before him*, Iſa. 40. 11. It ſhall be recompenced to thee much beyond what thou canſt do, though thou ſhouldeſt employ in his ſervice, every Hour and Minute of thy Life. Be not careful, or afraid, how much Happineſs thou ſhalt miſs of in the mean while, or what miſery thou Mayeſt involve thy ſelf in, or art liable unto, but truſt thy God, who ſhall abundantly make up for all. Men may (for there are found thoſe which actually do) *go through the ſeveral changes and chances of this mortal life*, and yet they have no ſuch expectation to come. So that we may keep Innocency, and take heed unto the thing which is right all along; for it will give peace at the laſt, which is further conſummated in Eternal Glory. We ſhould not conſer with Fleſh and Blood, which is for preſent eaſe, and ſhrinks at the leaſt ſeeming pain, but immediately do the thing we are called unto. Neither ſhould we ſtand to examine the Events and Conſequents to our ſelves, but reſolutely do our Duty, come what will thereof. *And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto Men, knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive*

the

the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt, Col. 3. 23, 24. In each ſingle Action let the Intention be unto God: Even thoſe things which we do for one another, may be ordered and ſtretched up, that we may always conſider how we ſhall Glorifie and Pleaſe God hereby. As of Sin the Act is little, and ſoon paſſeth over, ſo the Act of Duty is ſomewhat longer, but may be performed, and then this alſo is paſſed by; but of both the Guilt and Expectation doth ſtick and remain, the Puniſhment or Reward are to come. And alſo the preſent ſenſible Good or Evil, do ſooner go away than the Morning Dew, and ſignifieth nothing at all afterwards. So that it cannot be ſaid or pronounced, What Man is Happy or Miſerable, but he is only to be denominated and found thus, as it ſhall be with him in the things to come. Envy thou not the Glory of a Sinner, for thou knoweſt not what ſhall be his End. Neither do thou Pity and be grieved at the poor and low Eſtate of God's Faithful People, for thou doſt not diſcern how Graciouſly he will be pleaſed to deal with them at the laſt. When the Lord comes to rehearſe up his People, and to make Reſtitution and Diſpenſation of all things, then this Man ſhall be pronounced Bleſſed and another Accurſed, though this laſt whilſt he lived, he counted himſelf an Happy Man; and the other's Life was eſteemed Madneſs, and his End without Honour.

Our Reaſon and Underſtanding can fetch in

things afar off, and make them seem all one as if they were near: We can conceive of things Future, as if they were already Present: That as we know we should do, and as even then we shall verily and indeed wish we had done. That we should so behave our selves in the midst of our Trial, as we shall desire we had done when we come to an Account, and it shall be rendred to every one according to his Deeds. We are upon our Good Behaviour all this mean while. And as it was said to *Cain* immediately before his Wicked Fact, so it is told to every one of us, before we enter upon the Actions of our Life, *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, Sin lieth at the door*, Gen. 4. 7. Accordingly from Time to Time, we are to lay hold of every Opportunity for well-doing, and as carefully avoid the Occasions of all manner of Evil.

This is repeated over again, for indeed it had need be as often inculcated, as *Moses* in the Book of *Deuteronomy* doth repeat over and over again to the *Israelites* God's Law, for them to observe and do it. *To write the same things over again unto Good Minds is not Grievous*; but *to them it is Safe*. And though it may seem nauseous and irksome to the Evil and Ungodly, so it would be but once to mention what they have no Mind to know, and no Heart to do. All is comprised in the Observation of God's Law, and it is of Absolute and Indispensable Necessity, so that it can never be pressed or repeated

peated too much. We should have it always in our Remembrance; and as it should be written and ingrafted in us, so it should stir up and be continually sensible in our Minds, that we may know how to act, and have wherewithall to answer every Temptation, and drawing aside to Evil; and also have that which would quicken and actually stir us up unto Good.

The World makes enquiry, and seems to be desirous after Good; and when it is pointed out and shewed unto them, they will not accept and imbrace it: This is not the sort they would have, or it is too High and Excellent for them, through Ignorance they do not desire it. They are for abundance of Corn and Wine, or for Carnal and Sensual Pleasure; but for the Light of God's Countenance, for that Gladness he puts into the Heart, for Spiritual Joy and Eternal Peace; These things the Worldly Man knoweth not, neither doth he apprehend the just Worth and Excellency in them: But a little outward Mirth, in the midst whereof the Heart is Sorrowful, or sudden Flashes of Rejoycing, which end in Darkness, this is what he doth catch and seek after. A Thousand or Ten thousand repeated Acts of this Nature, do not make up the True Happiness; for each is unsatisfactory at the very time, it is interrupted, and all determined at last. In Truth, None is to be blamed for endeavouring to make his Life as Comfortable as he can, for passing on these few and evil Days of his Pilgrimage with the

lesser Trouble and Sorrow. But in the mean while great Heed and Care should be taken, as to the Means, whither Sinful or not; and to whither several parts of Duty are not left undone upon this Pretext. If we do *fulfil all Righteousness*, and *walk in all the Commandments of the Lord Blameless*; If we do take heed to our ways, that we Offend or Sin not, in God's Name let us rejoyce our selves as much as we will. If we *Sanctifie the days of our Feasting*, and use our utmost Watchfulness and Circumspection that *we Sin not, nor Curse God in our Hearts*, Job 1. 5. because he doth not allow it to be so with us always, then we are to Praise our God, and we may give way unto Honest Mirth and Cheerfulness: And so in the other extream Condition, If in Cold and Nakedness, Hunger and Thirst, we can Bless our God and be contented, let us trust him further, whither he will not bring us to True and Enduring Happiness.

Whilst others are busied, and conversant only about the Present, let us look out to the End: Nay, Let us secure that, and then let the Present take care for the things of it self. Shall we make it an Article or Doubt, Whither we shall immediately set upon the keeping of God's Commandments, for fear of losing so much Pleasure and Ease in the mean while, and subjecting our selves to Pain and Irksomness. Know we not, that if it were so, our God will abundantly make up for all by his Recompence at the last, as he doth give an Earnest, by the Sweetness and Comfort

Comfort we perceive even now: For if we consider that Approbation of Mind, that strong Consolation and lively Hope, and take in one thing with another, we have more Good now, than possibly could be attained by any Variation or Disobedience. It is both agreeable and satisfactory to our Nature, if we reflect upon it according to Truth, and without its Corruption; for God who made us, and knoweth our Frame, hath fitted his Laws and Commandments accordingly. What the Apostle saith, *I had not known Sin but by the Law, for I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not Covet*, Rom. 7. 7. So in not a much unlike manner it may be applied, That if we did throughly know the very Nature of Sin and Lust, we should not so much give way or consent unto either; for that which led our Forefathers into the Transgression, is the same that doth entice us at this very day. *The Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one Wise*, Gen. 3. 6. Here was an Imagination of *Good*, *Pleasure*, and of *bettering* ones present State; and this prevailed to yield unto the Temptation. Now if more of each sort of all these three, were to be had by keeping within that Station and Bounds God hath set, then a most selfish and Wise Man knoweth what he hath to do. Nay, there is each of this sort to be had in the other Trees of the Garden. God hath already sufficiently provided for the well-being

of Mankind in the lawful use of those things he hath given; and it is known unto God, and we are to wait his good Pleasure, what he will do yet further for his Creatures. He gives us all things richly and sufficiently to enjoy, and hinders from nothing which is really Good and Profitable for us. Nay, *Lust* and *Covetousness* is but an Extravagant and Unreasonable Desire, for we had enough before, and whatever is more is Evil.

If we did instance in the several kinds of Sin, with the way how they did prevail over Men, we should find that it did proceed from a wrong and false Imagination of more Good than really is therein; and they make a shew of Happiness which they do not perform. All those Works of the Flesh, recited in *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. carry with them a little Pleasure, seeming Good and Advantage, which are thought necessary to make Man Happy. So Covetousness, with its several kinds of Injustice and Wrong, do promise Gain and Profit, which likewise are supposed to contribute unto the same end. The like may be observed of Pride and Vain Glory, and all other kinds of Evil; they come in to Please and Gratifie, or they are some ways esteemed convenient. Now Happiness is the End, and more than all these put together; but they are ignorantly and falsly judged as several parts to constitute unto the whole, and that each doth conduce somewhat toward it.

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Herein may be perceived the Usefulness and Excellency of a right and thorough Knowledge, for that apprehends the same thing before, which the Man is fully convinced of afterwards by Practice and Experience. If he comes to Repentance, (otherwise he is Damned and Miserable.) This includes hearty Sorrow and Shame for what is past, and a real unfeigned Resolution to do so no more. Seeing he now knows it to be as it is, he doth really and sincerely wish that he had never done it, and he is fully resolved not to do so any more. It is truly said, a Wise Man should never do any thing to repent of it, for he should know beforehand what would be the evil Consequent of such a thing, and this should oblige him at first to refrain and not to do it. Now all of us should first look up, and have respect unto God above, and consider how that we are Creatures under him, and we should obey him and keep his Commandments, which extend unto all that we have here to do in this World. And we may thus judge, either this is reasonable and fit to be done, or it is not. No Man dare or will deny, that God is to be obeyed, and that presently and at all Times. Neither can they gainsay, but that his Commandments are *Holy, Just* and *Good*; which if *a Man do, he shall even live by them.* They are suitable unto and preserve our Nature, and lead up unto Eternal Life and Blessedness. Now this may be discerned at first as well as at last. And so he may conclude it both reasonable, and make it his actual deter-

mined Choice to observe them, *I have Sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy Righteous Judgments*, Psal. 119. 106. And if this be done at first, there is no need of Repentance. It is certainly better to Sin not than to have sinned; for otherwise those many Commands, Cautions and Directions in Scripture, of *abstaining from all appearance of Evil*, would not have been for our Good. So he is in the more Happy Condition, who hath kept himself Innocent all along, according to the Tenor of Gospel-Righteousness, who never did continue in Sin, and therefore cannot so properly turn from, or repent of it.

This is the thing which God requires of Man, is well pleased with him now, and will reward him hereafter. That he should be enlightned, and fully apprehend God's ways, and also walk in them: That he should make his word the constant Rule of his Actions, to do thus because of such a Commandment or Direction; and again to refrain from that which is either Forbidden or Doubtful, or doth no ways tend to God's Glory. In whatever he takes in hand, to have a secret Respect unto God's Statutes, according to which he will live, and act, and *suffer himself to be led and shall guide him continually*, and then be sure to follow his Guidance if the Man is indeed perswaded that it is better for him thus to do, he will also sincerely endeavour to do thereafter; for there are so many things which urge to this, that whoso considers, must act accordingly. In the several

times

times of Trial and Deliberation, he might thus Reason within himself, which is better and safer to be done, Had I not better wait on and seek after the Lord than let it alone? If I should neglect at this Moment, shall I not hereafter wish that I had not neglected? Will not an Hour and so of the residue of my Time spent in the Service of God, turn to better account, than if the same had been lavished away in Sloath or Neglect, impertinent Business or Vain Pleasures, or in hungry Recreations? And so, would it not be better accepted with God, if I were governed by his Commandments, than if I did walk after mine own Thoughts, according to mine own Stubborn Will, or Vain Humour? All that we have already is from God, and therefore Thankfulness doth oblige to as much; and what we expect further is from him, and then Hope, and a due Preparation for our selves, do forcibly exhort to Duty.

We are now in an imperfect and wanting Condition, which desires for what is Perfect and Compleat, and of whom should we seek for this, but of the God who made us, he also hath promised, that he will perfect that which concerneth us, *Thy Mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever? Forsake not the Works of thine own hands*, Psal. 138. 8. What did move him at first to Create, the same doth continue, and will engage to add yet more, until he hath finished the Work in *Perfection* and *Happiness*. But he will be sought unto, and also we must endeavour to please him before he grant this thing, *The Lord is good*

to them that wait for him, to the Soul that seeketh him, Lam. 3. 25. All the things of this World cannot make a Man Happy, for they are not satisfactory, nor yet enduring. The first would be more perceived, if Men were not after the manner of Beasts, transformed into Sloth and Stupidity, or sunk into gross Darkness and Ignorance: The latter is sensibly felt by every one. Neither the Pleasures of Sin, nor Profits of Transgression, nor the seeming Ease or Conveniency of Irreligion and Ungodliness, not each singly, nor yet all put together, can give the true Happiness; therein is esteemed more Good than really is; and if it were not so much as imagined, yet even that could not render satisfied and truly Blessed. Nay contrariwise, Destruction and Misery are in their ways, and the way of Peace they have not known. It is a Deviation and Wandring from the way of Salvation and Happiness; It may for a while promise Safety and Pleasure, but doth lead into Danger and Punishment, as we are assured by that God who made and knows all things.

If such a thing doth certainly deprive of more Good, and involve into a greater Evil, than now it makes a Pretence to bring us hinder from, a Man who is endued but with common Understanding and Caution for himself, knows what he hath to do, even to decline and avoid that thing as is ordinarily done in worldly Matters. If you do but stretch this very same Principle of acting a little further than this present Time, and it will engage to renounce

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those very things, which others so greedily catch and seek after. We are but in a Maze and ignorant Perplexity, whilst we look after, or are swayed by the Effects and Consequences of things; for we may indeed imagine, but we know not what they will be; and by vain Surmises and Fears, we may be kept off from doing Righteous things and what we ought. But let us first mind what is written, How readest thou? And in Simplicity of Soul, and according to the best of our Knowledge, How understandest thou? And according to what the Lord Commands or Directs in his Word, so will we speak and do; Shewing our selves as obedient Children, and then let the Lord do with us as seemeth him good; Observing all manner of Duty, done what will thereof, *They that know thy Name will put their Trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee*, Psal. 9.10. Were we assured of this, and could we fully depend upon it, we should not use irregular or unlawful means to prevent at first, nor afterwards to be relieved out of our Distresses. Neither should we so much fail and be discouraged in our Mind, but be sure not to leave off waiting on the Lord. Did we verily and undoubtedly believe at first what the Lord will perform at last, with what Chearfulness and Activity should we go on? But the clear Manifestation of this is somewhat hidden and concealed from us, to exercise our Faith and Trust, and to prove our Obedience in the mean while.

We should always act by foregoing Thought,

Thoughts, even in the least and more Inconsiderable Actions of our Life; and at every time have a right Knowledge, and also an overruling Thought, which should actually incline us to the better and safer side; That our Hearts may be as the *Vineyard of our Lord*, which he will water every Moment with the continued Distillings of his Grace and Goodness, which may prevent and help against the Suggestions and Imaginations of Sin and Evil; and it may be throughly *applied to fulfil thy Statutes, always even unto the End.* If God suffers us sometimes to be in Temptation, we should constantly discern when we are so; and have a Thought continually, whereby we may overcome, and not be led away by it. If we can come off Conquerors at one time, why not at another, and so a third, and thus pass through the several Seasons of Trial. The thing is possible, and that Satisfaction of Mind of resisting the Temptation is much greater than the Pleasure would have been in yielding unto it. By what Thought of Good thou didst prevail at one time, thou mayst likewise at another; and in all the Questions and Doubts of Mind, thou mayst have still what shall determine thee to God and Duty. When thou dost well and rightly, Thank thy God for it, and keep this still in the Imagination of thy Heart, that it may again help to serve in time of Need and Trial; having always in Mind a Divine overruling Thought, which may actually perswade it against all manner of Temptation, Lust or Hindrance.

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The *Moralist* observes, that it is better to have a few good Precepts of Life for a Man to constantly act by, than a great multitude of them; for those are more easily retained in Mind, whereas a Multiplicity doth confound or perplex, or we let them slip, or each hath not so forcible a Constraint over us. And indeed a few right Principles of Good, which are kept continually and pondered in the Heart, which are general and extend to our several Actions, and will indeed engage our Practice accordingly: These will more help to our Salvation, than all the Variety of Knowledge; which last may indeed furnish the Understanding, but the practical part doth exercise unto Godliness, and preserves the patient Continuance in well-doing. What keeps in Obedience, and maintains Good Works, will be found more Useful and Beneficial to Mankind than any other thing, However it be *highly esteemed amongst Men*, and this is lessened and despised, for it obtains the greater Good, and serves to the more excellent End.

The great Matter is to rightly understand every tittle of our Duty now that we may do it, and also the manner of Distribution, how it shall be rendred to every one according to his Work at the end of things, that we may not lose any future Reward for the present Pleasures of Sin or Gains of Unrighteousness, or by any Omission of what we should do. To know the utmost in all things present, and have such a lively Faith in things to come, as

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to be *perswaded of them, and embrace them*, Heb. 11. 13. and also act in pursuance after them. We are as much assured as that we now live, and we have the same certainty as of the things we see, handle and converse withall, that God hath provided better things for us; even so very great and enduring, that it is not possible for us little and mortal Creatures to conceive. Nay, the little member of the Tongue, which boasts of great things, cannot utter them forth to the very extent and reality as they are; and they being reserved in God's hand and disposal, according to his good Word and precious Promises, wherefore we labour to the utmost that we may be accepted of him. The more we know of our present weak, little, imperfect and miserable Condition here in the Body, it doth press us more urgently so to have our Conversation in this World, that it may be changed into the contrary and desirable Qualities of Good and Perfection. Our manifold Affliction doth make us the more earnestly desire (and that is in vain unless we use the means accordingly) that we may come to that place where we shall be comforted for the evil things we had here. Every thing we meet withal, doth carry Instruction and Exhortation, if we had that Heavenly and Spiritual Art to observe and improve them accordingly. That we may be always put in remembrance of and quickened in our Duty. That whilst we are among the things here below, we may refer them all upwards. Though our Body is confined

confined to this place, yet our Spirit conceives as wide as the vaſt Air. The Mind conceives and enters within the Vail, and is always thinking againſt the time ſhe ſhall fly out hence, how ſhe may ſecure her Reſt there: *If I may by any means attain to the Manſions above.* I am contented to act or ſuffer any thing, ſo I may be received up into *Abraham's* Boſom. *And he ſaw that Reſt was good, and the Land that it was pleaſant*, Gen. 49. 15. Seeing that there is ſuch an exceeding Good ſet before us, ſhew us any way that we may come at it. *What ſhall I do to be Saved?* I am for looking out whether there is any thing more: And I am ſtill for giving Diligence, how I may make my Calling and Election more ſure; for ſuch an infinite and eternal Good cannot poſſibly be made too ſure of; and this ſhould ſtir up all Labour, Earneſtneſs and Care, till we be actually inveſted therewith. *Be Sober, be Vigilant, for your Adverſary the Devil walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.* He watcheth for an Opportunity to turn you aſide, and if poſſible, to deprive you of your Acceptation and Reward, but however of ſuch a part and degree thereof, that you may loſe ſomewhat of the *Things you have wrought*, 2 *John* 8. and ſo you miſs of that fullneſs of Reward, which otherwiſe you might have been a partaker thereof. And therefore know and make void his Devices, that you may be nothing hindred or deceived by him. There is that in the Chriſtian Life, which will exerciſe all our Time and Labour. As Servants are employed

employed all the day in the Work of their Master, and as a Maid doth continually attend upon the Business of her Mistress, so we are to *wait on the Lord all the day*, Psal. 25. 5. and to *be in the fear of the Lord all the day long*, Prov. 23. 17. When the Child Jesus was carefully sought by his Parents according to the Flesh, he replies to their Admiration, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers business*, Luke 2. 49. and in another place he saith, *I have Meat to eat that ye know not of*, John 4. 32. And when they understood not the Saying, he explains it, *My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work*, Verse 34. So likewise as we have him for our Lord, we are to obey his Will; and as we have him for our Example, we are to do as he did; as he laid the Foundation, so we are to build thereon: As Jesus Christ himself doth say, in reference to him who is the Great Lord over all, *My God and your God, My Father and your Father*: So likewise he hath committed to every one of us as Servants and Children some work to do, for the Glory of our Master and Father which is in Heaven. The great King hath committed to every one of us, some Gifts and Talents to be occupied in the mean while, till he shall come to require an Account. Obedience to his Laws, and Improvement of our Grace and Knowledge to the utmost Advantage, will take up what Time and Leisure we have here, if it were more than really it is: To keep the Heart with all Diligence, To receive all God's Words into it,

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To have them appear forth and be sensible, that the Man may always do accordingly; To bring them forth for the Edifying and Instruction of others: To grow in Grace and Knowledge, *till the Man of God is throughly furnished for every Good Word and Work*, and many other things of like nature will take up that space here on Earth, which is lent unto Man to understand and seek after his God. And the time thus expended will turn to better account than any thing which can be thought of or named under the Sun.

Make thou thy Servant to delight in that which is Good. Which is accordingly granted by Custom and Continuance in the same. That Self-sufficiency and Contentedness doth arise from God and Duty. The Meditation of him is Sweet, and there is Joy and Satisfaction in doing his Will. So that the Man who is exercised therein, doth not envy nor is troubled for the seeming Prosperous Condition of others; but he is rather grieved that they also do not come, and *taste and see that the Lord is Good: Blessed is the Man that trusteth in him*, Psal. 34. 8. Our selves (the Lord is Witness, who knoweth all that is in the Hearts of all the Children of Men) are chiefly *grieved* because *People do always err in their Heart*; Heb. 3. 10. That whilst they desire and seek for it in every thing besides, they will not be perswaded nor trust accordingly, that this Happiness is to be had in God only; That they will not come over to partake of his

Goodness. When they have at any time right inclinations and dispositions to Obedience, this one thing is needful, that they would but *continue* the same, *O that there was such an Heart in them that they would fear me and keep all my Commandments always, that it may be well with them, and with their Children for ever*, Deut. 5. 29. To keep all his Commandments always doth begin their Happiness here, which is continued as long as they are on this Earth; it is derived down to their Posterity, and is for ever consummated in the Heavens.

This seems to be a plain and positive Assertion of the Holy Ghost, that it shall be *well with Mankind to keep all his Commandments always.* But it is contrary to our Thoughts, for we often think it expedient to break and not to give heed unto them; but yet God is True, tho every Man is Wicked and Disobedient. What he hath said, he will perform; and it shall be fulfilled, tho we are apt to distrust and Murmur. Those Irregular thoughts and our other Sins do hinder that it is not so well with us, as it would be otherwise. *If we did wait on the Lord and keep his way*, Psal. 37. 34. Do his will and *Trust in him at all times*, Psal. 62. 8. Believe in him without wavering and doubt, how contentedly and cheerfully might we go on in the execution of those things he doth command us? If we did resolutely and vigorously put forth, using the right and good means,

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we might behold Satan falling from Heaven as Lightning, and the Spirits would be subject unto us. This would be no small Comfort, for they do hinder and defeat our good Purposes. But then we should further rejoice *that our Names are written in Heaven*, That we are Servants of Almighty God, That we fulfil all his will and do his pleasure. What pleaseth our God to command or direct us in that we are likewise pleased to do. when we have a frame and temper of Spirit Subject to his Will, when our Hearts are once conformed to his Word and Commandments, we may serve him with joyfulness and gladness of mind. When we consider diligently what he doth already give and provide for us. When we believe firmly what he hath further promised, when we observe narrowly the secret and hidden ways of his overruling Providence, how that all things so work that we may just perform our Duty and be comforted in the mean while: So that it is well and better with us, than with them who flourish and encrease most in worldly Goods. May we not more surely rely upon God's infallible Word that it shall be well with us, than the vain and deceitful Promises of others, or our own Imaginations in our own Designs and Enterprizes, for we know by experience that we are often beguiled and mistaken as to both; but the Lord never said to the House of *Jacob*, *Seek ye my face in vain*. Neither is he wanting (as some are apt to doubt) to make good

his Promises at the present time. But they do err in misapprehending of them; for the great and precious Promises are yet a far off. And now the Divine Goodness is only engaged so far as to give us all things pertaining to Life and Godliness, to preserve Health and Strength of Body; and he puts Grace and *Consolation* into the Soul that we may Perform. And if we are at any time cast down, yet we should not then be so discouraged as to neglect utterly and leave from Duty. In the name of God let us go on and take whatever we shall meet withal, for the time is short and hasteneth away. Whither we Rejoice or Rejoice not, whether we Laugh or Mourn, whether we are in good plight and steadfastness of Mind, or are heavy and cast down, It all goes on and we flie away. And whatever is done here it is for Eternity. Either it passes into Condemnation, or it makes way for Repentance. *There is one Event to him that Sacrificeth or him that Sacrificeth not*, and this is found so by daily Experience. But the same word of Truth saith, *That we must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive for the things we have done whether they be Good or Evil.* It is certain that the *Lord God of Recompences shall surely requite*, Jer. 51. 56. And this will much exceed both as to the delightful or tormenting Nature, whatever is esteemed so here. The Acts are suddenly over, and so the Joy or Sorrow of of them is suddenly slipt by. And indeed it is strange that a reasonable

Creature

Creature ſhould be ſo much concerned as to that fugitive thing of Joy or Sorrow; but his care and ſollicitation ſhould be to what it tends at laſt. Nothing is ſo good as to be truly deſirable, and nothing is ſo bad but what may be endured. And therefore the firſt is not to be eagerly catched after, but to be carefully avoided if it ſhould lead and beguile into Miſery; and likewiſe the other may be choſen and ſubmitted unto if it makes for and increaſes our Crown and Reward. I mean as to the Delights and Pleaſures of Sin, ſo of the ſeeming pain and trouble of Duty. The firſt are nevertheleſs to be abſtained from, the others to be willingly undertaken if they help unto good in the latter end. And tho this may ſeem harſh and uncouth at firſt, yet it is both Practicable and eaſie to him who is exerciſed therein. It is thus by cuſtom and continuance, and afterwards it grows up into Delight and ſincere Satisfaction. Notwithſtanding all vain fears and ſurmiſes, anxious care or ſinful diſtruſt, yet by thus doing he ſhall have more Happineſs, yea, and be ſenſible of leſs Miſery even as to this preſent time, than poſſibly the one can be had or the other avoided by all Irreligion, or the pretended wiſdom and caution of any Diſobedience.

Much more might be ſaid as to this Point. But as the *truth* may be cleared, ſo again the force and perſwaſion thereof may be loſt by multiplicity of words, and therefore it is convenient to add no more upon this particular Head of Diſcourſe, eſpecially there having

been so much demonstrated in the fore-cited Book of *Happiness*, and as to the several Heads of Good and Evil there treated of, so that he who will not perceive nor be convinced by what hath been already said, neither would he be perswaded if *ten thousand words* were more added to the same purpose.

CHAP. V.

Herein sundry Things are written against them who will not be perswaded by, nor live according to, Words; and also against following the Multitude.

BUT why do I mention this? *In vain is the Pen of the Writer* or the Tongue of the Speaker, for some obstinate and stubborn Souls do therefore refuse it. They will not be tied and confined to live according to Words, either they will be despisers or stubborn, not to mind at all, or practice just contrary, or otherwise.

Indeed one would admire by what kinds of method Satan's Kingdom doth stand; by what slender Threads he holds Men Captive at his will; for do but once examin and touch them, and they will fall and snap asunder. Those Imaginations which he puts into the Hearts of Men and Women, and thereby works in them with all deceivableness; yet when they are once known they are presently confuted. The falsehood

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and danger of them are so clearly laid open that themselves may see it; and so they need not miscarry through all his Delusions, if they would but receive the knowledge of the Truth that they might be Saved.

Amongst the several things which Satan, *Who deceives the whole World*, Rev. 12. 9. doth suggest, and each Man keeps close in the deep of his Heart. That aforementioned is a common and generally received Imagination, which they hug and hold fast! And to confirm them the more therein, they will have a seeming excuse for it, because so many go about troubling Christians with Words, and there is such a multitude of words in the World, such hold it the better way once for all to reject them, and not to be limited or confined to live according to Words. But they should do well in the first place, to consider what it is they thus set at naught and cast off even what they shall not prosper nor be blessed in, *Their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust, because they have cast away the Law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the holy one of* Israel, Isa. 5. 24. These are the words which they will not be guided by, nor give heed unto. They refuse obedience and subjection unto Almighty God, just like their fore Fathers, *A stubborn and rebellious Generation that kept not the Covenant of God and refused to walk in his Law*, Psal. 78. 10. *They*

rebelled against the words of God and contemned the Counsel of the most High, Psal. 107. 11. Now these words of God are contained in Scripture, which is his Statute-Book for his government of the World. *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. As saith another Apostle, *For the Prophecy came not in old time by the will of Man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. 1. 21. At this the People are so impatient and will not be governed by it, which is downright Disobedience and manifest Sin, and shall receive a due Punishment thereof; for Sin is the transgression of the Law, either going over and beyond it, or doing otherwise than that hath prescribed, or not doing what that hath enjoyned: So that those stubborn Souls who will not live according to Words, are convinced as transgressors and offenders of the Law of the most high God, and they shall be dealt with accordingly, for now they are under the Threatning and Curse, and they shall hereafter be sensible of the Punishment and Misery. Who is he that saith, he will not obey the Law of God? If any should do so as to the Laws of the King and our Country, judgment would be executed upon him of Death or Banishment, or loss of Liberty or Member, according to the several sorts of Punishment among us. And albeit our God doth keep Silence for a while, and doth not execute Sentence speedily upon the Sons of Men,

Mah, yet it will be far worse with them who shall thus behave themselves towards the great King of all the Earth, the Lord God Almighty. It is near the same thing whether they speak out with a loud voice, or say so in their Heart, or practice it in their Life and Manners, that *They will not have God to reign over them.* See Luke 19. 14. *Who set themselves against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their Cords from us,* Psal. 2. 3. For they will not be holden in by invisible Restraints, nor be kept away from their own doings by sense of any Divine Law and Obligation. *Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* Psal. 12. 4. But those who think and act after this manner are the worst sort of Sinners, who do presumptuously and sin with an high Hand. Few will own as much, though more do so.

The general course of Transgression is by way of Excuse and Delusion, and these do take up the forementioned Plea, That because of the multitude of Words, and the falshood, Vanity and Evil of many of them, therefore they do not live according to Words. But as the Apostle saith, *There are it may be so many kinds of Voices in the World, and none of them is without signification,* 1 Cor. 14. 10. So a Word is but as it were a Voice expressed and articulated. And every word (if it be proper and taken singly) is significative, but when they are connected together

ther in a Sentence, and are to shew forth the sense and meaning of somewhat; then they are to be judged of and discerned. There is *Truth* and *Falshood*, *right Words* and *wrong*. But we should in no wise reject the *Truth* and *Right*, because there are of the other worse sort, for if we do that, we certainly run into the other; and so out of a shew to avoid Falshood and Wrong, it is so managed by the cunning delusion of Satan, that we do hereby fall into it. The World and all the things we have to do with here are made up of Intermixture and Contraries, where is Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Truth and Falshood, Apparent and Real: So that if we have not the one, we must have the other. If we have not the better we shall meet with the worse. And therefore if we would indeed have the better we must know and choose it accordingly; but not despise and set at naught the more excellent things; for this is submitting unto the worse. According hereunto the Wisdom of God teacheth, If thou shalt learn to put a *difference between the Holy and Prophane*, the *Clean* and the *Unclean*, then *shall ye be meet to come into mine House*. Such shall be meet to partake of the Inheritance with the Saints in Light, who can thus seek out and discern things in this place of Darkness. They shall be fit for Heaven who can and also do escape the Corruption that is in the World through Lust, and thus order their Conversation aright

aright here on Earth. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net that was caſt into the Sea, and gathered of every kind, which when it was full they drew to ſhoar and ſat down, and gathered the good into Veſſels, but caſt the bad away*, Matt. 13. 47, 48. And ſo whatever thoughts ariſe or are ſuggeſted to our mind, we are to entertain and nouriſh the Good, but to extinguiſh, caſt forth and not admit the Evil. In like manner it ſhould be of the words we hear or read; we are to gather and receive the good words into our Hearts, but to caſt the bad away. The Wheat is to be gathered and laid up in the Treaſure of our Heart, but the Chaff is to be blown away. Knowledge and Truth are to be ſought after and received; but Imagination and Falſhood are to be thrown out. They are both mixed together; for as by Learning and by right Conſequences we come to the knowledge of the Truth, ſo a falſe and deceitful kind of Reaſoning will preſent it ſelf, and fallacious and miſtaken Conſequences will ariſe through the Sophiſtry of Satan and his Inſtruments, which we are likewiſe to diſcern before we pronounce Judgment, and try before we Believe. Now every Man hath either the right and true Promiſes or others which are not: And becauſe all People pretend unto and would have the firſt through Pride and Self-conceit, they miſtake which they have already for them, and ſo they will have no more nor better. *The fear of the Lord*

Lord is the beginning of Knowledge, but Fools despise Wisdom and Instruction, Prov. 1. 7. When our Heart and Understanding is first lifted up towards God, and then looks down and sees things as he sees them; which must be in their very Nature; for certainly he knows them who made and Establish'd them. When the Apprehensive Faculty is enlightned from above and endued with that which cometh down from the Father of Lights, we do first know and consider of the Great God over all, and then how all other things were Created by him, but now they are under him to Govern and Rule according to his good Pleasure, both the things in Heaven, the things in the Earth, and the things under the Earth.

Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your Shame, 1 Cor. 15. 34. Neither have they the understanding of his Law, this is to their worse deserving. And whatever they pretend unto others or seem to themselves to know, it is separated from them both. That is, they discern somewhat of the Creatures without the Creator. And because they understand not his Law, neither do they perceive that Obligation they are under, and the true connexion of things one to another. So they are destitute of the true and useful Knowledge, and in the Language of the Holy Ghost, they are direct Fools *Understand, ye Brutish among the People and ye Fools, when will ye be wise?* Psal. 94. 8. Which it

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is impoſſible they ſhould be, as long as they deſpiſe and reject the means of Being ſo. VVhat is real VViſdom and Inſtruction, may ſeem to them as Folly and Impertinency; when that indeed is ſo, with which they pleaſe and content themſelves. So that VVord doth pronounce which is to Judge and determine of every Man's State and Condition, and according to which he is to receive.

We are but Creatures upon Trial, and in that ſame word it is ſet down how God will be pleaſed to deal and add further with every one of us. So that tho our different Thoughts and Apprehenſions do not ſignifie much as to one another, yet we muſt give Account to that God with whom we have to do, who is Judge of all Men and of all Things; and he hath expreſly foretold us that we ſhall receive according to the Good or Evil we have done. And tho in this wicked corrupt World they call *Evil Good and Good Evil*, Iſa. 5. 20. Becauſe they have the Multitude and Faſhion to bear them along with it, yet *God is Judge himſelf*, Pſal. 50. 6. *Who will ſweep away the Refuge of Lies*, Iſa. 28. 17. and adjuſt all things according to Righteouſneſs and Truth. If Men do at preſent contemn and refuſe what he doth command and eſteem of; and again they do honour and ſeek after what he hath forbidden and is an Abomination in his Sight. But God's Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, and his ways are not as our ways. He is not beholding to his Creatures.

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He is great and highly Exalted; And what are a parcel of Worms of the Earth unto him? But yet themſelves ſhall know and feel what they get by this their oppoſition and contrariety to their Maker. If there was not Stubbornneſs and Rebellion in their hearts they might underſtand. For as the Eye doth diſcern Light from Darkneſs, and the Taſte doth perceive Sweet from Bitter: So likewiſe in this diverſity of things the Soul of Man can diſcern between Good and Evil, Truth and Falſhood, Wiſdom and Folly. *Every Scribe that is inſtructed into the Kingdom of God, is like an Houſholder who brings out of his Treaſure things New and Old.* Both ſorts are wholſome and good, which were firſt received in and he produces forth upon occaſion. *Therefore ſhall ye lay up theſe my words in your Heart and your Soul*, Deut. 11. 18. He means the words of the Spirit of God and of Truth. The greater number whereof the Mind is furniſhed withal, ſo much the better; *That as the deſire of the Righteous is only good*, Prov. 11. 13. Let him ſincerely and diligently endeavour that all the thoughts of his Heart may be good, true and ſignificative at all times, thereby ſhutting out Evil, Falſhood and Vanity. *A good Man out of the good treaſure of the Heart bringeth forth good things*, Matt. 12. 35. which may ſpring up into ſuitable Words and Actions. *Sanctifie them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth*, John 17. 17. And People may diſcern what is rightly opened

pened and alledged, what is neceſſarily inferred from this Word of Truth, for that alſo is true and will be fulfilled.

And tho many falſe *Chriſts* and falſe *Prophets* and *Deceivers*, have and are gone out into the World, as this ſame Word of Truth hath foretold, and it hath been verified by the experience of every Age, yet they deluded more by their Signs and Wonders, by their forged Miracles and lying Legends (as thereby hath increaſed the *Roman Church*) more than by their Doctrin. For that of our Saviour is Remarkable, *If it were poſſible they ſhall deceive the very Elect*, Matt. 24. 24. But it is not poſſible to deceive them, for we have a ſtanding Word which is as a Rule or Touch-ſtone, to try the Doctrins whether they be of Men or no; and by ſetting our Conſciences in the ſight of God, and by the Spirit he hath given us we can ſearch out and know the hidden things of Diſhoneſty, and the practice of thoſe who handle the Word of God Deceitfully. But when the Truth is manifeſted, it will appear ſo to us. For great heed is to be taken leſt under the pretence of avoiding Deceivers we do refuſe and turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven, and ſo we ſhall not eſcape, *Heb.* 12. 25. But be in danger to be excluded from thence. For this ſlanderous Report and falſe Imputation of a Deceiver was faſtned on our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, Matt. 27. 63. and his choſen Prophet, *Jer.* 20. 7. and his Apoſtles,

2 *Cor.*

2 *Cor.* 6. 8. and upon almoſt all faithful Preachers and Writers ever ſince. Such is the Subtlety of Satan and his Inſtruments, by which he deceiveth the Nations, That he will firſt throw out that Reproach and Calumny falſly on others, to ward off divert and turn aſide that Imputation which truly falleth back upon himſelf. VVho are Deceivers indeed, they will call thoſe ſo who teach the way of God in Truth. For theſe laſt being obliged in the courſe of their Miniſtry to lay open every thing that helps forward the Salvation of Mankind and to hinder their Deſtruction as much as poſſible, they muſt alſo herein be like their great Maſter, as to give a caution to People to take heed what they hear, and to beware of thoſe who are Men-pleaſers more than the Servants of Chriſt. Nay, we muſt admoniſh of every thing which diſhonours God and brings danger unto Men, as unfaithful Teachers do both. But theſe again through Pride and unwillingneſs to be Reformed, *ſeeing they hate Inſtruction*, Pſal. 50. 17. will endeavour to ſtop the way againſt the true handlers of the VVord of God; for the former ſort being ſecretly conſcious of what may be proved and manifeſted againſt themſelves, they will try to be beforehand and falſly accuſe or ſurmiſe ſuch to be guilty of that, which is truly their own Sin and Fault. This is one cauſe of that Reproach which hath fallen on God's holy Prophets and People ſince the VVorld began.

As

As alſo it ſhews the perverſeneſs and Diſobedience of Mankind that they will as it were, *Reply againſt God*, Rom. 9. 20. In the Margin it is Anſwereſt again and diſputeſt with God, which is to reſiſt his will, and it is a token of an unmannerly, proud and diſobedient Servant. When they break his Laws and God tells them thereof by his Word and Spirit, which he ſends forth through ſome of their Fellow Creatures, yet they are angry thereat and will retort upon them. Again; they have a mind to continue and go on ſtill in Diſobedience: But this telling them is a kind of ſtop and interruption which they do not like, and ſo they had rather remain Diſobedient, and have this for an excuſe that they did not know it. They would willingly be forgiven by God, yet what they do in this manner is a further Sin and Provocation. But God will ſearch it out (though we cannot ſo particularly and exactly diſcover it) for he knoweth the very Secrets of the Heart. *Who is wiſe and he ſhall underſtand theſe things, Prudent and he ſhall know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the Juſt ſhall walk in them, but the Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein*, Hoſ. 14. 19. The Wiſe and Prudent know the difference between *vain words*, Exod. 5. 9. (thoſe there were not ſo tho a Proud, Ignorant and Ungodly *Pharaoh* did call them ſo) and the words of Truth and Duty; the Wiſe and Prudent know the difference between what words pertain to real Inſtruction, and what words are of empty Speculation; what ſerve

unto Godlineſs, or tend unto vain Jangling; what is good unto the uſe of Edifying, or miniſters only unto Idleneſs and Vanity.

But Sinners do contrariwiſe in all theſe. They chuſe and are employed in the worſe, inſtead of the better. And though they make their boaſt not to regard nor live by Words, yet they are acted by Thoughts; which Thoughts are made up of Evil and Vanity, Falſhood and Folly. And even all their Thoughts might be uttered and written in Words as themſelves know what they think, and by what they are guided, which they could ſpeak forth or ſet down, and then they become words. But if theſe did appear in like manner, how ridiculous and fooliſh and vain would they be? *Deſtroy thou them, O God, let them fall by their own Counſels: Caſt them out in the multitude of their Tranſgreſſions, for they have rebelled againſt thee,* Pſal. 5. 10. Which is accordingly fulfilled, for they go on in their own Counſels till they fall and are Deſtroyed, and they are intangled in the multitude of their Tranſgreſſions till they actually drop into Puniſhment and Miſery. The Holy Ghoſt calleth them a *Rebellious People, which walketh in a way that is not good after their own Thoughts,* Iſa. 65. 2.

This is the Queſtion and Controverſie which the Lord hath with the Inhabitants of the Earth, whether they ſhall do according to his revealed Will and Commandment, or go after their own Thoughts. Indeed they are for the laſt becauſe it hath a ſhew of Pride, Humour

Humour and Conveniency; but this is their Reward and utmoſt they will have, for it will never attain to any real and laſting Good. And when a ſingle VVorm of the Earth ſhall prefer and follow his own will againſt that of the great Lord of the VVorld, it doth *Provoke the Lord to Anger conninually*, Iſa. 65. 3. As if their own Thoughts were better than God's Thoughts. They will ſtrive for Maſterdom and have their own Imaginations and Sayings above the VVill and Commandment of God. This is plain *Walking contrary* to him, to which is threatned that he will *bring ſeven times more Plagues upon them according to thiir Sins*, Lev. 26. 21. And again it is further added, *Then I will walk contrary alſo unto you in Fury, and I even I, will chaſtiſe you ſeven times for your Sins*, Verſe 28. *If ye walk contrary*, &c. Their manner of doing is expreſſed in the Preſent Tenſe, For now is the time of their Trial, but how God will deal with them is Future, for it ſhall be rendred accordingly. As alſo to prove in the mean while whether they will be reformed from their Sin and Iniquity, and do according to his Law.

Indeed all People do one or the other. Either they live according to what is contained or directed in the word God, or according to what is thought and Imagined in the Hearts of Men. VVhich (as aforeſaid) might be expreſſed forth in words, ſo it is near the ſame thing. Or the Men are led by the Temptations and Suggeſtions of Satan, which alſo as

they appear to the Mind in an intelligible manner, ſo they might be ſpoken forth. But none will plead outwardly for them; and therefore the Queſtion in ſhort turns upon this Point, VVhether we ſhall go according to Divine or Human VVords; for all People High and Low, Rich and Poor, are guided continually by one or the other. VVhich of the twain is our bounden Duty, and which is the beſt and alſo which is the wiſeſt way for the attainment of Good and Happineſs that hath been largely before demonſtrated. There is *Line upin Line, Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept.* Here a little and there a little, Iſa. 21. 10. throughout the whole Book of God. And yet more in quantity and number of words hath been delivered from the Tongue and Pen of his Saints of the ſeveral Generations ſince the World began. So much hath been ſaid and done to make this appear unto the ungodly and diſobedient in order to reſtrain them from the Error of their ways, that if it was all written, (as indeed a great deal thereof is) I ſuppoſe that a Man's whole Life would not ſuffice to Read it. Nay, they ſeem to reject it becauſe of that ſeeming multitude of words touching this Matter, yet themſelves go according to their own Thoughts, though theſe are more than what do occurs to their Mind concerning Goodneſs and Duty. They are acted and led by the multitude of their own Thoughts, and they do not refuſe to go according to them for all their vaſt number.

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Like Brute Beasts made to be taken and deſtroyed; They follow the Herd not knowing whether they go, for they perceive not when they are preſſing on to be Killed and Deſtroyed. And there are alſo to be found too many called Reaſonable Creatures, who remain altogether as Ignorant, when they are in the way to Death and Hell. The way of Ungodlineſs and Sin leads directly to it; and yet too many continue therein without fear. They have the Multitude and Faſhion on their ſide, and they are for doing what the moſt do, eſpecially thoſe of the Richer ſort: They are for going *according to the courſe of the World*, though they *ſhould be condemned with the World*, 1 Cor. 11. 32. And they think it good to ſwim with the Stream, not knowing that it tends to the bottomleſs Pit.

Satan, who deceiveth the whole World, *Rev.* 12.9. hath found out this device to blind them in his and their *own Deceivings* (ſo called 2 Pet. 2. 13.) For they imagine that they do not Err, becauſe they have ſo many of their ſide; however they ſhall fare as well as the moſt, and they ſhall be in the ſame condition with others according to whom they do in this preſent World. To do as others do is one Thought by which the Men of this World act; and it is here expreſſed forth in words: So it is the ſame principle of Action which they hold unto, tho it be not ſpoken out or written. But to do barely as others do without regard had to Good or Evil, Duty or Sin, to what is Commanded or what is Forbidden, is Tranſgreſ-

ſion and Folly now which ends in Puniſhment and Miſery hereafter. Alas! ſuch do not conſider there is a great God over all, who now looketh from Heaven upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth, and conſidereth all their Works; who hath given a Law for them to live by, and he is to judge and render to every Man according to his Deeds.

If People did conſider throughly, and would do acccording *to the Moſt*, they ſhould do according to God's Will, for himſelf is more than all the Generations of Mankind, and ſo more than all that are now living. He is more than ten thouſand times ten thouſand kind of Creatures, which are any where in the World, above the Firmament, or in the vaſt and ſpacious Air, in the habitable parts of the Earth, or any where underneath and without the viſible World; for all things were created by him, whether Viſible or Inviſible, *Thrones* or *Dominions*, *Principalities* and *Powers*. *Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven*, Matt. 6. 10. So it is more Univerſally as Heaven is greater than Earth, which is but a part and next to nothing. The *Innumerable Company of Angels*, Heb. 12. 22. Thoſe many ſorts of Creatures, whether Animate or Inanimate; Thoſe *ten thouſand of his Saints*, *whereof* Enoch *propheſieth*, Jude 14. *The hundred and fourty four thouſand of all the Tribes of the Children of* Iſrael, *and that great Multitude, which no Man could number of all Nations and Kindreds, and People and Tongues*, Rev. 7. 4, 9. All theſe obey and fulfil the Word of God, and they do his Pleaſure. And thoſe

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are many more than all those Rebels now living upon the Earth, or those Generations of sinful Men since the World began, *Whom the Lord hath carried away as with a Flood*, Psal. 90. 5. to be delivered over to the Lake of filth and stink, or like the *Grass which in the Evening is cut down and withereth*, Verse 6. and is to be burnt with *unquenchable Fire*. And so it will be of all those which are yet to succeed, until there be an End made of *Transgression*, and the *Sinners be consumed out of the Earth, and the Wicked be no more*, Psal. 104. 35.

A little after the Creation *All Flesh had corrupted its way upon the Earth*, Gen. 6. 12. which caused the Flood, whereby the World that then was, being over-flowed with Water perished. *But the Heavens and the Earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto Fire against the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of Ungodly Men*, 2 Pet. 3. 6, 7. As certainly as the Flood came upon those in the days of *Noah*, so certainly shall the whole World be consumed by Fire. The Punishment and Vengeance of God are executed by *Fire* and *Water*, which do drown and consume many as well as few. And Death that consigns them over unto it, hath reigned from *Adam* ever since. *Hell hath enlarged her self and opened her mouth without measure; and their Glory, and their Multitude, and their Pomp, and he that rejoyceth shall descend into it*, Isa. 5. 14. which hath been and continues unto this day to be fulfilled. So it is a vain Shelter and foolish Safety, to think to escape with the Many, for God can and doth

us easily deal with them as with few. We sensibly know, that within seventy or eighty Years, within the compass of the Age of a Man, he doth quite empty the Earth of all its Inhabitants, and causeth others to spring up in their stead; whom again he takes away in his own order. And though now they assemble themselves in Companies to commit Wickedness, and gather by Troops to do Mischief; Yet they drop away one by one into the Bars of the Pit, and he scatters them that they fall severally, until they all die away and come to nothing. He doth now give his express Command by his Servant *Moses*, *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil*, Exod. 23. 2. and forewarns us by the Son of his Love, whom he sent to Redeem and Preserve us from it: *Wide is the Gate, and Broad is the Way, which leadeth unto Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat*, Matt. 7. 13. So that who is for being amongst the Multitude, He will be amongst them also, and so he will miss of that narrow way which leadeth unto Life. Nor will he be one of those few who find it.

Indeed there is an Inclination in Man to do as the rest of his Brethren do, but then he hath some seeming Reason for it, or he is void of Understanding as to have no set and inward Principle of Action; and then he can just conceive what others do, and order himself to do according. Example is a sensible and visible thing, and thereupon it hath such a strong Prevalency over most; and it is yet stronger over those who know not what it is

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to live by Faith, nor act by hope of unſeen things. But they are moſt led on thereby, who leaſt think within themſelves. A Multitude is made up of ſeveral diſtinct Perſons, which conſpire in one thing or near the ſame. But it was received of one or few before it is made known unto and embraced by many, and then the like Diſadvantage lay againſt it, as now they conceive on the other ſide. But it is ſaid now, it hath the more general Acceptation. Why, the moſt do ſwallow it without Examination. And who admit thereof, muſt have ſome Rule. Then which God hath given none other unto Men beſides his Word, which is to try Good and Evil, Duty and Tranſgreſſion, as alſo what may be diſcerned from the Truth and Reality of things. There is no other way under Heaven, whereby we may be Happy, but this only.

Now every one deſires to be Happy, that is, To enjoy what Good he can, and to avoid Evil. Even thoſe have that Wiſh and Intention who *turn aſide every one to his own Way*. Who live as their Neighbours and Acquaintance, and as the reſt of the World do; why this hath a ſhew of Peace and Good Will, and they do hereby avoid the odious thing of Singularity, and the Irkſomneſs of Reproach. But they ſhould do well to conſider in the firſt place, of *Glory to God in the Higheſt*. How is that annexed to their kind of *Peace on Earth*, and *Good Will towards Men*. Their Hearts ſhould be lifted up with Angels and the Heavenly Hoſt towards him, who ſitteth above and *remaineth*

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King for ever. And how is he honoured by such a kind of Life as the Inhabitants of the Earth lead, which is made up of Forgetfulness of their Maker, Sin and Sloth. How are his Statutes kept and his Laws observed? Are *Peace and Truth met together* as in the days of *Hezekiah?* see *Isa.* 39. 8. Or is it like the Hills of the Robbers, the Assemblies of the Ungodly and Wicked, an Agreement together to preserve their old accustomed Ignorance, Corruption and Error? And then those who would teach Knowledge and guide into Truth, shall be reputed Enemies to Civil Society, and Troublers of *Israel*, the Church of God. And what is the commonly called Good Will, but to *let every one do what is right in his own Eyes.* Not to meddle with their Sins and Transgressions, To avoid *Sound Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction* in *Righteousness*, for all this hath a shew of Disturbance. It is said to spoil Family-Peace and good Neighbourhood. Even in this *Antichristian Age* wherein things are turned upside down, such *are thought not to seek the Welfare of this People but the Hurt*, Jer. 38. 4. who are *not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to Repentance*; who Study, Pray and Teach, and do use all the outward means possible to help forward the *common Salvation.* But this is our Comfort and Encouragement, that the Spirit of God witnesseth the same (which we also find and wish in our Hearts) That they do indeed *bring Good Tidings* and *publish Peace, and also that they have Good Will towards Men*, notwithstanding they are esteemed

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and reproached contrariwise by the World. Even the Saviour thereof (unto whom this and all Scripture hath more especial Relation) witnessed what himself found; The *World hateth me, because I testifie of it that the Works thereof are Evil*, John 7.7. But this is a double Iniquity; first to do Evil, and then what is yet worse, To hate him, *even Jesus, whom God sent to bless them, in turning away every one of them from his Iniquities*, Acts 3.26. In order to which it is first necessary to tell and shew them thereof. When God would have Men turn from their evil doings, they kill and evil intreat those whom he sends on his Message. *They hate him that rebuketh in the Gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly*, Amos 5. 10. They cannot endure to be interrupted in their course.

But is their course Good or Evil, right or wrong? If the World did that which is Good and Righteous, they need not be afraid of the Ministers of God; for then they would meet with Praise and Encouragement from them, instead of what they now look upon as Trouble and Disturbance. Then indeed all three would meet together, *Glory to God in the highest and on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men*, Luke 2.13. *When the People are gathered together and the Kingdoms to serve the Lord*; when they walk and agree in his Fear and Obedience, then they have Rest and Comfort. Then we may do as others do as long as they keep unto the same Rule; and so long we have Peace and rejoycing one with another. But then we do

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after this or that manner, not because others do the like, but we see it thus written, and we are so directed.

This is one considerable difference between the Good and Evil, Righteous and VVicked, that the first have a set Rule of Action, God and his VVord; whereas the Evil and VVicked have not so much regard to that, but they are led on by the Example of others and by their own Imaginations. The Example is the Multitude of the Richer sort, who though fewest in Number, yet have Influence on many, for these crave after VVorldly Goods and have their *Their Persons in Admiration*, the which they bestow and convey down to have others that are thus beholding unto and dependant on them. So that here it may be reduced, that for Profit and Interest they act after this manner.

But even this Argument (if stretched out throughly) would bring them into the right way. *What is a Man profited if he should gain the whole World and lose his own Soul?* Matt. 16. 20. Is not Happiness and Salvation more than present Gain and Advantage? And what if that should be lost by omission of Duty and commission of Sin? They misemploy that Diligence and precious Time, which might be spent on a more excellent thing and would tend to better account. *For every Man shall bear his own Burthen*, Gal. 6. 5. And likewise every one shall receive the reward of his own Labour. And therefore what others do, what is that to thee? Mind thy self and thine own things.

things. Thou wouldſt have good to thy ſelf and avoid Miſery, why then go in the way, and uſe the Means accordingly. Anothers Happineſs extends not to thee; for it rather raiſes Envy and a greater Reſentment. So that the Miſery of others is but a poor Reiief and Comfort to thine own. Still as thou art divided from others, ſo thou muſt labour to ſecure and embetter thine own Condition abſtracted and ſeparated from that of Others.

The whole World lieth in Wickedneſs, 1 John 5. 19. Which as ſure as God's Word is true, will involve them into Condemnation and Miſery. Even thoſe who now are for living according to the vain Manners and Cuſtoms of the World, would not willingly have ſuch an End. But it is the particular Sins of ſeveral Perſons which make up the general corruption of Many; and they are ſubject to that Puniſhment which is now denounced from Heaven, and will be inflicted accordingly at the time ſpoken of. *Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be ſtrong in the days that I ſhall deal with thee? I the Lord have ſpoken it, and will do it*, Ezek. 22. 14. *When thou crieſt, let thy Companies deliver thee: But the wind ſhall carry them all away*, Iſa. 57. 13. They are under the ſame ſmart and pain themſelves and cannot eaſe thee, but rather increaſe your Howlings and cauſe a deeper ſenſe of that Miſery which ye are all plunged into. It will not be a ſufficient exchange for the loſs of Eternal Happineſs, to be a little puffed up with following the humours and ways of the Multitude

Multitude; for the utmost advantage and conveniency thereof, at present, cannot recompense for the Danger of what is to come. The reputation of Good Nature, of being Sociable and Compliant, All the Ease, gain and Profit thereof, cannot countervail so great a Loss and Pain. Much less will not those things whereof there is no benefit at all but only to gratifie a sudden transient Humour, and barely to conform unto the Example and Practice of others.

Of which nature are those several things of Ungodliness, and that fashioning and corrupting the several parts of the Worship of God. The chief Reason why so many continue Ungodly and do not *tread God's Courts*, or they do it only on the Lord's day, and not every day, as was the manner of the first Christians to *Continue daily in the Temple*, Acts 2. 46. Is because they see that most do the like of the same Age and Circumstances with themselves. And they are for not varying from them because, they would not be accounted odd and singular, nor have their Reputation lessened. Now to examine this and other things of like Nature by that often mentioned Rule, In every thing one takes in hand or admits of, and so in all Debates and doubts of Mind it might be reduced to this, Whether the good or evil of a thing will be greater? Whether it is better to do, or to leave such a thing undone. And that taking in the consideration of the time to come as well as the present; for that will as certainly be present also. And then

a Wise Man knoweth what he hath to do or not, to Chooſe or Refuſe. Now if in the preſent Caſe, that ſingle Thought only will do a Man as much good, and ſtand him in as much ſtead throughout a whole Eternity, as it is now ſuppoſed in the days of his Fleſh, then indeed it is vain to go into the Sanctuary, and it is no profit to walk Mournfully before the Lord of Hoſts and conſtantly to keep his Ordinances, according to the ſurmiſe of the *Prophane Sinners* in Mal. 3. But ſurely his Word and Promiſe, thoſe many immutable things in which it is impoſſible for God to Lie, for the Reward to thoſe who diligently ſeek and ſerve him, all theſe may be more ſurely truſted unto than what is only imagined, in the vain, falſe and wicked Minds of Men. This may be ſenſibly perceived as a manifeſt token and forerunner of a greater loſs, that their Ungodlineſs at this preſent time comes to nothing at all. It hath a regret at the ſeveral times it is practiced, which is more bitter than the imagined tedioufneſs of Religious Duty; and they do again falſly hope that it will be paſſed over in Forgetfulneſs or Excuſe. A *Book of Remembrance is written*, Mal. 3. 18. That it may be diſcerned between them who ſerve God and who ſerve him not. And ſo between thoſe wha do it more or leſs, with the ſeveral Circumſtances belonging thereunto.

Though there is now *the ſame Event to him that Sacrificeth or Sacrificeth* not, yet the Judge of all the Earth ſhall do Right. *Though a Sin-*

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ner doth Evil an hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know it shall be well with them which fear God, which fear before him, Eccles. 8. 12. In that day there is none but would be of the *Lord's Jewels* if they might, and they would be willingly spared by him as a Man spareth his own Son, that Serveth him. But then they must endeavour to please and find acceptance with him In the mean while, for if there should never so much be done in things pertaining to God, and he should not like nor accept thereof, it profiteth nothing. As again, if he is well pleased with our Sacrifices and Works, we have the utmost that we can desire on this side of Heaven, for we have the earnest and assured hope of his Favour and Reward,

That we may not Serve him with Doubt and Ignorance, we are to take heed that *We do all things according to the Pattern in his Word.* As *Moses* was *admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle; for see* (saith he) *that thou make all things according to the Pattern shewed to thee in the Mount*, Heb. 8. 5. For this is according to his express Command, and also it is agreeable to the Duty of a Son or Servant to do according as it is Commanded and directed unto him, or they know assuredly such the continual Employment which their Father or Master would have them to do. But when *Men choose their own ways*, Isa. 66. 3. it is in God's Sight and Estimation, as *Cutting off a Dogs Neck*, or as *Offering Swines Blood*; which is an Abomination, and doth displease him

yet

yet more. Or if they do a great multitude of meer Acts of outward Religion, yet when these Works come to be examined of what sort they are, instead of a Commendation and Reward, it may be demanded of them, *Who hath required this at your Hand to tread my Courts*, Isa. 1. 12. 'Tis not the *Much speaking of the Heathen*, nor yet *The Superstition of Jew or Papist*, nor those several kinds of Worship to the One God, or Many that are observed by the several Nations of the World, which makes God to hear or accept thereof. But known unto God are the Works of all Men, and it is left unto him how he will be pleased to deal with them accordingly. As Bodily Exercise profiteth nothing, so outward Services are little available; but the Heart is that which God looks unto, and with what Mind they are done. It must be with an Intention to please him, and to please him only. Thereby shutting out all Custom and *Conformity to the World*, Rom. 12. 2. Unless before they are agreed in a Right thing. In things pertaining to God no respect must be had unto Men; *For God will not give his Glory unto another*, nor any part of his Worship to Men of the same Likeness with our selves. And yet how common is it in the World, to do thus and thus in Religion, because those which have the Reputation of Great Learned and wise Men, do the same. Whereas, we do not understand nor consider throughly that these have provoked God to Jealousie and Displeasure with their Inventions, and now he suffers them to err from the right way, For seeing they were not contented with that Rule which God had given them, but despised it for the seeming plainness

and Simplicity thereof: And they would find out ſomething which ſhould ſeem outwardly more Wiſe and make a greater ſhew, than a true and Spiritual Worſhip doth. It pleaſed God to let a poor and mean People Serve him and be Saved after this manner; but the others are left ſtill to go on in their own ways, in which they miſtake and Perish! God is the ſame ſtill; His Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, *He hath choſen the foolish things of the World to confound the Wiſe; and God hath choſen the Weak things of the World to confound the things which are Mighty; and Baſe things of the World and things which are Deſpiſed hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are: That no Fleſh ſhould glory in his Preſence*, 1 Cor. 27, 28, 29. See that whole Chapter. *Caſt abroad the Rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is Proud and abaſe him*, Job 40. 11. That he may cut off all occaſion of Boaſting. There is no obliging of God with any thing exabundant, or with doing more than is commanded; for we have all ſinned and come ſhort of that, nor yet ſhould we preſume to do beſides what is required, for he doth diſown and is diſpleaſed with all that. Any thing that ſavours the leaſt of Pride, is an Abomination to God, and ſo what would make any pretence to Merit or deſerving all this is rejected by him.

Man was at firſt the work of God's own Hands. Yet I had planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed. How then art thou turned into the Degenerate Plant of a ſtrange Vine unto me, *Jer.* 2. 21. For ſince that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only Evil continually,

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Gen. 6. 5. Man hath been ſo uniuerſally Corrupt throughout, that till he is Renewed again after the Image of him who Created him, which in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, he ſtands not only diſtinguiſhed from, but as it were in perfect contrariety unto God. Said our Saviour to one of his Diſciples, *Get thee behind me Satan thou art an Offence unto me, for thou Savourest not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of Men*, Matt. 16. 23. As if the things which did ſavour of Men were a Stink and evil Smell and a *Smoak in his Noſe*, Iſa. 65. 5. which he could not endure, and would have behind or a far off from him. Indeed the infinite Holineſs and Uprightneſs of God is in no wiſe reconcileable to Man's Sin and Corruption; and he doth the more abominate and loath it when he beholds it covered with the Mask and Viſour of Hypocriſie. Who is all-Wiſe and all Knowing, he doth pity and deſpiſe our Folly and Ignorance; but it is a further Aggravation, ſo that he cannot or rather will not endure therewith when Worms of the Earth would be wiſe beyond their Maker, or pretend to know otherwiſe than he knoweth and hath decreed or purpoſed; It doth provoke him juſtly to Anger, That when the Sun, Moon and Stars, and the whole Family in Heaven ſo much Greater and more Excellent Creatures than we, do obſerve the Law which he hath made. And ſeeing he hath given unto Men Laws, which are Holy, Righteous and Good; he hath ſhewed unto us ſtrait ways, yet ſtubborn and diſobedient Man will not keep and walk in them, but every one is for walking after *the Imagination of his own evil Heart*. And as they live and are joined toge-

ther in Civil Society, so this carries on the course of the World, and each Person doth make a part of and contribute unto the universal Sin and Wickedness.

The word *Imagination*, doth import no set Rule of Action, but it is a Wandring or Guess. Now it thinks it may be thus, but is afterward mistaken. And this is so much the worse as the End is more excellent which it aims at. Now that End is Good and Happiness. Every Soul (as aforesaid) is in pursuit thereof, and his several Actions are intended accordingly. There is *One God over all, One rule of Action in his Word*, One End of everlasting Happiness or Misery; and all the deeds done in the Body, are as so many Steps to one or the other. This is actually so though too many perceive it not; nor consider thereof in the time of Probation and Tryal. To walk all along in a vain and false Imagination, and be deceived at last when this is but once for all Eternity, when there is no possible Redress of this Errour, must very much enhanse the Folly and Misery of such a Man. The first Errour and Evil is in having departed from God and casting away his Fear, and exempting himself from his Obedience. For though it is so suffered in this Life to prove Mankind more perfectly, that it may be seen, It is possible for him to run out his days here without having due regard and respect to his Maker and Preserver; yet it is known unto God and also Revealed unto us how he will be pleased to deal further with them. Even according as we order our Conversation, and as our doings are. That Word by which we are to Live, be Judged, and receive accordingly

dingly, doth now forewarn and acquaint us that things will be otherwise or contrary to what they appear now. *For that which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is abomination in the sight of God*, Luke 16. 15. And so what is universally received and fashionable among us, will be rejected and even loathed by him.

He hath left another Rule to follow than the Multitude or the meer Example of others. An Holy Man of God doth speak on this wise, *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*, 1 Cor. 11. 1. But no otherwise, for Christ *had done no Violence, neither was any deceit found in his Mouth.* He was the Holy one of God, and in him was found no Sin. So that if we do the same which he did, we may be assured that it is not Sinful. Again, his Meat and Drink was to do the will of God, and he did always the things which pleased his Heavenly Father: So that if therein we follow his Steps as we have him for an Example, and do the like things that he did, we may hereby know that we do the will of God also, and what is pleasing and acceptable in his Sight. But every Man besides is a Liar; for they have all (both Saint and Sinner, none excepted) varied and gone aside either in some single transient Instances, or in many continued ones from the Word of Truth and from the right way. It is Written, *And thou shalt not go aside from any of the Words which I command thee this day to the right hand or to the left*, Deut. 28. 14. That is neither to one Extream nor yet to the other. But where is the Man or Woman, who have not gone aside from any of the words wich the Lord God hath Commanded in the Bible,

both as it comprehends all that is written in the Old and New Teſtament. Both Jews and Gentiles, yea all Mankind of every Generation and Country are under Sin, and have come ſhort of what God requied in his Law. So that whoever doth follow any of theſe Examples in all things, even of the moſt Perfect and Upright among the meer Sons of Men, he will go aſide with them even unto the Tranſgreſſion: So that the word of God is to be our Rule, and not the Example of others.

However prone and ſubject the People of the World are to follow the Examples of their Fellow Creatures and to do what others do of near the ſame Age, Condition and Circumſtances of Life; yet in theſe times of the Univerſal Reformation of the World, which is now drawing on in theſe latter days, we muſt labour and endeavour Mightily to beat off and diſſuade People from actingaccording to that dangerous and miſtaken Principle of following theMultitude and being led by the Example of others. For beſides that to follow the Multitude, is a ſure token that ſuch are amongſt *thoſe many which go in the Broad way which leads unto Diſtruction*; *and they are not amongſt thoſe few in the Narrow way which leadeth unto Life*, Matt. 7. 13, 14. This ſeems to lye as the greateſt Prejudice againſt the ways of God, That though all his Commandments are *Juſt*, *Holy* and *Good*; And it is meet and right for all People at all times to obſerve the ſame; Yet ſtill nevertheleſs very few People do obſerve them. When the Scripture ſpeaks of thoſe glorious times *Thy People alſo ſhall be all Righteous*, Iſa. 60. 21. And how that *the Sinners will be conſumed out of the Earth, and the wicked will be no more*, Pſal. 104. 35.

For

For in what Prayer the Spirit of Truth doth Dictate, is included a Promiſe that ſo it ſhall be. As we read theſe and alike Places, what in the Prophet's Phraſe, is a *very lovely Song*, Ezek. 33. 32. And *Peter* reciteth from the ſaying of others, As if the *Scriptures were a cunningly deviſed Fable.* So in our way of ſpeaking, thoſe Scriptures ſeem to be as a pleaſant Romance, which contain things that were to be indeed wiſhed and deſired; but at firſt ſight they do not ſeem to be grounded on Truth, for the thing neither as yet is ſo, and there is no ſuch great outward likelyhood and probability that it will ever be ſo. What, *thy People ſhall be all Righteous*, when now not more than One in an Hundred are ſtrictly and univerſally ſo. And for the *Sinners to be conſumed out of the Earth, and for the Wicked to be no more*, How can this be, when all places are now full of them? But yet as the *Waters of Noah* did once cover the Earth, and ſo a common Flood doth now cover ſeveral parts thereof and the lower Grounds, which goes off again: So that Deluge of Sin and Ungodlineſs, which hath ſo long for many Years and Generations overſpread the face of all Nations, will at length quite go off and never return again.

An Inlet and preparatory to this glorious day of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs throughout the Earth will be when People ſhall once begin to leave off living by Examples, but they ſhall live according to the *Word of God* and the *Dictates of the Spirit.*

Tho *Satan's Kingdom* hath ſtood a long time yet it hath been all along upheld as it were by Threads, or as the *Spider's Web*, or as *Brittle Glaſs*. I mean, that

it hath been erected upon so slender a Foundation, and holden up by such weak Props, that if any thing had touched and beat vehemently upon it, it would have fallen in that part thereof; for as soon as it had been touched or grappled with, it would have presently broken and snapped asunder: And when when it was made up again, it was as Thread or Tow tied together, or like a Spider's Web made over again, or as the broken pieces of Glass set together again which was somewhat weaker than the former. To these and such-like Similitudes all those Thoughts and Imaginations in Men and Women may be compared; by which the infernal and unseen Spirit did work in the Children of Disobedience, for it was all either Evil or Falshood. And whensoever Grace and Truth had also an entrance into their Minds, and did once begin to close and grapple therewith, it did put it all to flight and overcame the Temptations and Suggestions of the Evil one, which he would bring on again after the aforesaid manner.

As heretofore observed, almost all Satan's Temptation is comprized in that which he used to our Grandmother *Eve*, *And when the Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one Wise, she took of the Fruit thereof and did Eat*, Gen. 3. 6. So that *Goodness*, *Pleasure*, *Desirableness*, (which last may be also expressed by conveniency or Expediency, are the three Baits, which the Serpent *who is more Subtle than any Beast of the Field*, doth make use of to fish for and catch the Souls of Men and Women; and where he also tempteth them to any Sin or act of Disobedience; which

which doth not seem either *Good*, or *Pleasant*, or *Desirable*; But it is either Humour or Frowardness, or Wilfulness, or they know not what reason they have for it, but they do it for all; There commonly it is Company and Example of others, like natural brute Beasts, Oxen or Sheep, which go on with the Drove and as they see others before them, not knowing where or wherefore. To do as others do, seems convenient or expedient, which comes under one of those three Heads of *Goodness*, *Pleasure* and *Desireableness*; for it is thought Safe, and also it prevents that Hatred and Ill-will which is commonly annexed to Singularity. Who do not in all their Actions seek to please God, yet commonly these same Persons endeavour to please other Men, or their own selves, that is, Their own Lust and Will, or the sinful Desires of the Flesh. By which is shewn forth that Principle ingrafted in them by the God who formed them of Pleasing some one, which should be terminated and arise up to their Maker and Creator only; but with them it is turn'd aside to their Fellow-Creatures, or to themselves.

Casting down Imaginations (in the Margent it is Reasonings) *and every high thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. To express forth these several Imaginations and every Thought, would swell this Treatise to a prodigious bulk. And indeed many of the Thoughts of Men are so vain and trivial, that they are not worthy to be spoken out, or to be set down in Ink and Paper. But for those Imaginations which carry a shew of Reasoning with them, if the Reader would narrowly and attentively observe, how each

of

them is answered and *cast down*, by the like words of Truth as that is effected, any other new Imagination as it shall arise, may in the same or like manner be answered and *cast down* also. The Metaphor of *casting down* is (I suppose) in allusion to Wrestling at the Olympick Games, which were in use among the *Corinthians*, and there sometimes a Tall Boasting Fellow would come into the Ring, whom another less Man who had more Skill (though not equal in outward Appearance) would oftentimes gives the Foil unto and *cast him down*: And so for *bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*. This is also a *Similitude* (in which the Holy Ghost delights, *Hos.* 12. 10.) taken from Warriors, where both the Adverse Parties contend and fight together; and they try with all their Strength and Skill who can kill or take one another Captive. There is a very near resemblance between things Visible and Invisible; for so it is likewise (as we may see with the *Eyes of our Understanding being enlightned*) between the Thoughts of Good and Truth, and the Suggestions of Satan and the Dictates of Evil and Falshood. All these are contrary one to the other, and they do fight and contend together in the Soul of Man. They strive there for Mastery, which shall prevail, which the Man shall be lead and governed by. And according as this is, so is the Discrimination to be made of *Godly* and *Ungodly*, *Righteous* and *Wicked*, they *that serve* God, and they *that serve* him *not*; for the Godly and Righteous and the Servants of God, are ever, or for the most part led and governed by the Words of his Grace and Truth. And when there is a War and Contest in their Souls, whether they

they ſhall overcome, or the Temptation of the World, the Fleſh and the Devil, the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life; Their Faith in the unſeen God, and their Knowledge and Fear of him, and the ſenſe of his Law written in their Hearts, do conſtantly, or at leaſt moſt commonly overcome all the other Aſſaults of the Evil one. Whereas the Ungodly, and the Wicked and Rebels, have indeed a faint remembrance, and a ſmall ſenſe of that Obedience they owe unto God and his Law. But in all theſe Temptations, or for the moſt part, they ſhew themſelves to be Servants of Sin and Evil; By conſenting unto and doing the ſeveral Acts thereof, as often as they were proved and tried. *They are a Rebellious People, which walketh in a way that was not Good, after their own Thoughts*, Iſa. 65. 2. and not according to the Directions of God's Word and the Dictates of his Spirit. Unto which they did owe an Allegiance as ſoon as they were born, and an Obedience as ſoon as ever they came to the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But caſting off and giving no heed to that, they are here truly and properly termed *Rebellious*.

Thou haſt delivered me from the ſtrivings of the People. Which *ſtrivings of the People* are thoſe Struglings and Doubts, and givings back in the Heart of Man, before he yields up himſelf unto the Obedience of God and of his Chriſt. Theſe *Strivings* would dethrone God and Chriſt out of the Soul; And ſo they have ſtrove and endeavoured for many Generations ſucceſſively in the Hearts of the ſeveral People thereof. To which the anſwer of the Lord is ever ſince the days of *Noah* unto this time, *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man, for that he*

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also is Flesh, Gen. 6. 3. for himself hath heretofore, and doth still strive with the Hearts and Consciences of Men. In which I will by no means so express it as to say, That the Spirit of God hath been overcome, But they *have rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit*, Isa. 63. 10. They have *quenched the Spirit*, 1 Thess. 5. 19. for that thing may and hath been done, which we are there cautioned and commanded against) so that God doth declare, *His Spirit shall not always strive with Man*, that is, He will leave off Fighting and Contending with Man for to come to his Obedience, but give him over, for that he also is Flesh, that is, wholly given unto *Evil* and *Corruption*, and to falling away and turning aside. Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty Years, and afterwards in the time of *Moses* it is reduced to *threescore and ten and fourscore Years* (see *Psal.* 90.) whereby we are given to understand, and it is as much as if God should say, whether Man will obey me or not, whether he will yield unto the strivings of my Spirit, or provoke me to withdraw it, yet his days shall be near the same, he shall live out however the appointed Time according to the Age of a Man. And though the Multitude of the People, both Men and Women of all the former and present Generations, have done thus perversly and contrariwise with God, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise, is he not thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made and established thee?* Yet as he had one good and godly Family in the midst of a whole ungodly and idolatrous Generation, whom he was sure of, and who were according to his Mind, *For I know* Abraham *that he will command his Children and his Houshold after him,*

and

and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do Justice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him, Gen. 18. 19. So amongst so many rebellious and sinful Generations of Men and Women, which have been successively one after another since the World began, and the like is at this day, and it may be a very few more are to succeed; Yet after all these, God who *calls the Generations from the beginning*, Isa. 41. 4. hath one peculiar Generation in his Eye; all of which, like *Abraham* their Father, in all their Families and Places, will take care that every one of them, not one excepted, shall keep the way of the Lord, *To do Justice and Judgment, That the Lord may bring upon them all those things which he hath afore spoken of in his Word*, concerning the Times of Universal Reformation, when *Thy People shall be all Righteous, The Sinners shall be no more*; When he will make *an end of Transgression, and bring in Everlasting Righteousness*. And that God hath such a Generation in his Eye and fore-knowledge, is expressed in *Psal.* 22. 30, 31. on this wise, *A Seed shall serve him; It shall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation. They shall come and shall declare his Righteousness unto a People that shall be born, That he hath done this.* So that as it was said of *Abraham*, He will command his Children and Household after him: So they will teach their Children and Posterity. *They shall declare this unto a People that shall be born, That the Lord hath done this.* What is that? Why, when the whole Earth heretofore was Corrupt, Evil and gone aside, he hath brought them all to rights again; as appears and is manifest by that *Seed* then living upon the Face of the Earth which shall *serve him.*

And

And whereas heretofore, The People of some Generations and Countries did serve him for a spurt as we commonly express it. Upon God's sending forth some Judgment, *The Inhabitants of the Earth did learn Righteousness*, or upon his doing some extraordinary and more than usual thing in the World, they would serve him earnestly and diligently for the present Season, or for a few Days, Weeks, Months or Years. But here was the fault and failure, that afterwards they would return again to their former Sin and Ungodliness, and to their Formal Customary Worship. Though they did keep the Commandments indifferently well for a very little while, yet they did again quickly go aside from the Commandments of God. And so things have gone on after this rate and manner ever since the Creation. But it will be better and otherwise, when those Times of Universal Reformation shall come from the pouring out of the Spirit of the Lord. *They shall fear thee as long as the Sun and Moon endureth, throughout all Generations*, Psal. 72. 5. That is during all their own Lifetime, and down forward during that of their Children and Posterity, which shall ever succeed henceforward. The *Children of thy Servants shall continue and their Seed shall be established before thee*, Psal. 102. 28. This is in opposition to that common and true Saying heretofore and now. That *Grace doth not go by Inheritance*; for many Godly and Gralious Persons have Ungodly and Graceless Children. Whereas the Promise here speaks, *The Children of the Servants of the Lord shall continue* in the fear of the Lord, all one as their Fathers did, and their Seed, (that is further down) shall be

Estabi-

Established before thee. That is, they shall be fixed and firm in the VVorship and Service, in the Obedience and doing the VVork of the Lord, as their Immediate Fathers and Grandfathers were.

CHAP. VI.

It is made known in the general from the Scriptures of Truth, (without any Reflections on particular Nations, Governments) that at length there will be an end of all Wars.

There is a time of War and a time of Peace, Eccl. 3. 8. And so the course of the VVorld hath went on interchangeably, sometimes one and sometimes another, ever since that Battel we Read of in *Gen.* 14. VVhere *Abraham* returned from the Slaughter of the Kings. But when God shall do that last and great Act, as to cause that *Nation shall not lift up a Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more*, Isa. 2. 4. VVhich Scripture hath not been as yet fulfilled: But is to be fulfilled according to that Divine Method and Dispensation, *The Word and things of God shall be fulfilled in their Season*, Luke 1. 20. Then the *Lord bringeth forth the Chariot-Horse, the Army and the Power: They shall lye down together, they shall not rise, they are Extinct, they are quenched as Tow*, Isa. 43. 17. God will bring them forth to shew only, and not for Use and Service; *That this righteous and peaceable Generation* may just see what kinds of Instruments their Fore-Fathers a *Rebellious and stubborn Generation* did make use of to kill and destroy; which

which they, *who shall Feed like Lambs after their manner*, Isa. 5. 17. will hardly believe without seeing them, that ever so much Violence and Mischief should be in the Hearts of Men, as that such Instruments of Cruelty and Destruction should be found in their Habitations. But as the Lord commanded that a Pot full of Manna should be laid up before the Lord in their Generations, that they may see the *Bread wherewith I have fed you in the Wilderness, when I brought you forth from the Land of Egypt*, Exod. 16. 32, 33, 34. So it is convenient and requisite, that some of each sort of those Weapons and devices of War should be kept for a Testimony, that the Generations following may [illegible] see, how it was with the Earth, when *God Created the Smith that bloweth the Coals in the Fire, and that bringeth forth an Instrument for his Work, and that had created the Waster to destroy*, Isa. 54. 16. *When at thy Rebuke, O God of Jacob, the Chariot and Horse are cast into a dead Sleep*, Psal. 76. 6. Never to awake out of it again. For it is before said, *The stout hearted are spoiled, they have slept their Sleep; they are bereaved and stript of those Engines wherewith they did execute their Revenge and Terror in the Land of the Living*. And now they *have slept their sleep*; they have done all their do, which they must never do again. What they did then do was as much at random and uncertainty from the true and proper ends of Man's Life (which was intended for Preservation, and not for the Destruction of others, and at last of themselves by so doing) as Sleep is now different from Waking; for in Sleep we Dream and think confusedly without the use of Reason and Knowledge. But they shall lye down together

together, they ſhall not riſe. There is an utter end of all that, they are extinct as Tow the Wrath of Man which did heretofore kindle all this, God ſhall reſtrain. *Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall Praiſe thee: the remainder of Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain*, Pſal. 76. 10. So as it ſhall go no further, and then it will ſink and come to nothing of it ſelf. They are *quenched as Tow*. If it would begin to ſmoak again, God will take care to put it out that it ſhall burn no more. Where his Prophet uſes theſe kind of pertinent and ſignificative Phraſes, he immediately adds, *Remember ye not the former things, neither conſider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing, now it ſhall ſpring forth, ſhall ye not know it*, Iſa 43. 18, 19. This is as much as if God ſhould ſay, Ye may juſt ſee and think of thoſe former things, but they are not worthy of your Remembrance and Conſideration, in compariſon to that *new thing* which God will do, which ſhall be both more pleaſant Entertainment to the Minds of his Creatures; and it ſhall be infinitely more ſatisfactory for them to be employ'd therein, than heretofore in making *Preparations for War*, or hearing tidings from the Camp. *I will even make a way in the Wilderneſs and Rivers in the Deſert.* The Holy Ghoſt ſeems here to allude unto the March of an Army with their Power; who being to paſs through a Wilderneſs or Deſarts, ſend thoſe before them to make way, as by cutting down the Woods and Briars, and making rough places plain, and removing great Stones or Rubbiſh. As alſo to guide and conduct them in the intricate way. As alſo to ſeek out Forage, Food and Water for Man and for Beaſt; if they can find out Springs and Rivers in the Deſert, wherein is leaſt likeli-

hood of any, and therein is moſt want of them. But God will ſupply all this to his Creatures, or make up unto them what is ſignified thereby. *The Beaſts of the Field ſhall Honour me, the Dragons and the Owls, Becauſe I give Waters in the Wilderneſs, and Rivers in the Deſert, to give drink to my People, my choſen,* V.20. Beſides that Satisfaction and Content, which without doubt is in the irrational but ſenſible Creatures upon Gods being their Creator and Maker, and alſo for his providing all things neceſſary and convenient for them. Hereby alſo may be ſignified, That when thoſe ungodly Men and Women who have been transformed after the manner of Beaſts, and have thoſe inward Qualities and likeneſs unto Dragons and Owls, as to love Deſtruction and hate the Light, do come to ſee and know what God doth for his Elect People, They will come to Honour and have an inward reverential Eſteem of him alſo. *This People have I formed for my ſelf, They ſhall ſhew forth my Praiſe,* Ver.21. Here is the drift and deſign, the End and Conſummation of all, that as God made Men and Women, They ſhould even now as in the latter days, they ſhall be purely formed for himſelf; *They ſhall ſhew forth his Praiſe.* That is, They ſhall have no other End but God, and to lay out themſelves for him, and God ſhall be their All in All, and nothing ſhall be heard amongſt them, but *Praiſes, Praiſes* to the Lord. Then the World will be as it ſhould be.

CHAP. VII.

There will be an End of all manner of Perſecuting the Servants of God.

WHen the Earth ſhall be reformed and become Righteous, this effect will alſo be ſeen and

and perceived, There ſhall be no more Hatred of, and Perſecution againſt the Servants of God. *They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my Holy Mountain, for the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*, Iſa. 11. 9. It hath been always and in all places found, That where is moſt of the Knowledge of the Lord (that is, ſuch Knowledge as is true, Saving and Sanctifying) there hath been leaſt Perſecution; as again where hath been moſt Ignorance and Darkneſs, there the Perſecuting work hath gone forward and abounded. But when the World ſhall be thus univerſally repleniſhed with the Knowledge of the Lord, there will not be the leaſt degree nor manner of it; not ſo much as to hurt Body or Soul, as to lay any hardſhip or reſtraint upon the firſt, nor yet to tempt or cauſe the Soul to Sin, or be wanting in Duty. Both which do now occaſion Vexation of Spirit. *But they ſhall ſee and be aſhamed for the Envy of the People*, Iſa. 26. 11. That is, whereas heretofore the World did envy at the People of God (from whence did ſpring up their Hatred and unkind uſage of them) thinking that ſuch would be more Happy and Bleſſed than themſelves in the end. But when God ſhall alſo manifeſt unto them the Favour that even the Wicked had, That even they *might have learned Righteouſneſs and beheld the Majeſty of the Lord* (ſee the foregoing Verſe) They ſhall be ſo aſhamed for ever having maligned and done deſpitefully againſt his Servants, as they ſhall never do it more. And whereas alſo heretofore the Churches had ſometimes Reſt from their Enemies, and again at other Times they were made Havock of and Perſecuted. This did happen interchangeably and ſucceſſively, as was

before obſerved, that at ſome times ſome Countries would fear the Lord greatly, and then remiſly or negligently, and not at all. And as there was a time of War and a time of Peace among the Nations; ſo likewiſe as to this we have the certain and aſſured Promiſe of the Lord. *Alſo I will ordain a place for my People* Iſrael, *and will plant them, and they ſhall dwell in their place; neither ſhall the Children of Wickedneſs waſte them any more, as at the beginning*, 1 Chron. 17.9. *He will make an utter end, Affliction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond time*, Nahum. 1.9. This (as may be ſeen from the two foregoing Verſes) is ſpoken as to that *day of Trouble* which hath come upon his *Servants that truſted in the Lord their Strong-hold*, which was ſtirred up and occaſioned unto them by the *Enemies of the Lord* (emphatically and truly called, *his Enemies*) though they did ſhew themſelves ſo to his Church, that is, his People. And when as to many of his Prophets, his Son Jeſus Chriſt, his Apoſtles, Miniſters and People, Affliction did ariſe up not only the ſecond time; but even in *Job*'s Phraſe, *The Lord was with them even to ſeven Troubles*, Job 5.19. Yea and to Seventy times ſeven; for their whole Life was a continued Train and Series and Succeſſion of Trouble and Affliction, How then was this found true? *Affliction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond time.* And indeed it cannot be otherwiſe underſtood and believed, but that God hath another day ſhortly coming, in the which he will fulfil and make good this his Word, when God will *Return*, *How long?* This queſtion ſhews how impatient and deſirous our Nature is of it (*How long! O Lord Holy and true doſt thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth*,

Earth, Rev. 6. 10. *And ſhall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them. I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily*, Luke 18. 7, 8. So that it will *Repent him concerning his Servants, O ſatisfie us early with thy Mercy, that we may rejoyce and be glad all our days, and make us glad according to the days he hath afflicted us, and the years wherein we have ſeen Evil*, Pſal. 90. 13, 14, 15. for the *Lord ſhall judge his People and repent himſelf for his Servants, when he ſeeth that their Power is gone; and there is none ſhut up or left*, Deut. 32. 36. *Like Sheep they are laid in the Grave, Death ſhall feed on them, and the Upright ſhall have Dominion over them in the Morning*, Pſal. 49. 14. Now to make the like Application of all theſe Scriptures here laid together, as *Peter* did in *Acts* 1. 16. *Men and Brethren* (who ſhall read or hear this) *theſe Scriptures muſt needs be fulfilled*, which the Holy Ghoſt ſpake by the Mouth of *Moſes*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, and Jeſus Chriſt hath ſpoken before concerning that poor afflicted and perſecuted Condition of the People of God, How *they ſhall take them Captives whoſe Captives they were, and they ſhall rule over their Oppreſſors*, Iſa. 14. 2. The Power of theſe Oppreſſors ſhall be utterly gone, and the *Upright ſhall have Dominion over them*. God ſhall *repent himſelf* for that hard Condition he ſuffered his Servants to go through with, and he will *ſatisfie and make them glad for it*. Now it being manifeſt that all this good Word is not as yet performed on this Earth and in this Life, from the like Reaſoning which the ſame Apoſtle *Peter* makes uſe of, *Acts* 2. 29, 30, 31. *Acts* 3. 21. We may aſſuredly gather and believe, That in the Reſurrection and Reſtitution of all things, God will moſt certainly

make good this his Word, That all things which are written may be fulfilled. And that there will be a beginning and entrance into this Blessed State towards the latter days here on the Earth, when the Lord *shall reign before his Ancients gloriously*. And all things shall exactly so come to pass according as he hath aforespoken of in his word. *When the Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb*, Isa. 11.6. and there shall be a Concordance and Agreement between the most fierce and devouring Natures of Men and Women, with the most calm, meek and peaceable Dispositions, according to what is further written and confirmed. *The Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together, and the Lion shall eat straw like the Bullock, and dust shall be the Serpents meat: They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my Holy Mountain, saith the Lord*, Isa. 65.25.

To make way and prepare for this glorious day of universal Holiness and Righteousness, is the end of all our Preaching and Writing, and laying before Men and VVomen all the *Words of Truth* which we can. *The Lord saith, I will come near to you to Judgment*, Mal. 3.5. So according to the goings forth and Emanations of his Eternal Truth, God doth come nearer to the Children of Men, both for Good and Comfort to his Saints and Servants, as also for Terror and Punishment to the Ungodly and Disobedient. *For that thy Name is near, Thy wondrous Works declare*, Psal. 75.11. God in Scripture is sometimes said to be afar off, and he is invisible. So that he cannot be otherwise shewn forth and made known unto others, but in his VVorks and by his Name. Both which are declared by fit, proper and true words. So that the Reader need not to be offended

fended at the multitude of them here uſed, if they help to make the inviſible God more known unto the Inhabitants of the Earth, and render him as it were viſible, yea and ſenſible unto their Souls. If we do not *darken counſel by words without knowledge*, but according to the meaſure of the gift in us, our words become inſtrumental that the things pertaining to God's Kingdom are rendred yet clearer and clearer, that the Children of Men may more eaſily underſtand and perceive them, than we do the VVork and VVill of God, *As I do this day, the Father to the Children ſhall make known thy Truth*, Iſa. 38. 18. If Righteouſneſs and Holineſs were ingrafted into the Hearts of all Men, ſo that they did live and were led by it at all times and in all places, The *Spirit of God would dwell in them*, 1 Cor. 3. 16. *As God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they ſhall be my People. And I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the Lord God Almighty*, 2 Cor. 6. 16, 18. VVhat is requiſite to all this we may read in the firſt Verſe of the following Chapter, *Having therefore theſe Promiſes* (both thoſe aforementioned are included, for it is expreſſed in the plural number) *let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the Fleſh and Spirit, Perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*, 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Be ye clean ye that bear the Veſſels of the Lord*, Iſa. 52. 11. And from what is written, *Thou haſt taken Captivity Captive.* VVe learn that God hath taken even Sin and Corruption Captive, which heretofore did hold the Children of Men in Slavery and Captivity. But when every Thought in them alſo is brought into Captivity unto the Obedience of Chriſt, God will plant ſome-

what elſe in the room thereof, *Thou haſt received Gifts for Men*, (even the qualifications of his Grace, and the fruits of his Spirit) *Yea, for the Rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them*, Pſal. 68. 18. So that though Men and Women have been Rebellious and Diſobedient formerly; yet when thoſe *Rebellious* Thoughts and Imaginations are brought into Captivity, when the *Gifts of God* are firſt lodged in the Soul, to make it ready and meet beforehand, the Lord God himſelf will come and dwell amongſt them alſo.

So that whereas it was before mentioned, *And the Lord ſaid, My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man, for that he alſo is Fleſh*, Gen. 6. 3. And the reaſon hereof was aſſigned becauſe the Fleſh did ſo very often overcome the Spirit, when the Children of Men did *Rebel*, and *Vex*, and *Grieve* and *Quench* the Spirit; yet the Bleſſing and Saying of *Gad* is made good, and herein is found true, *A Troop ſhall overcome him, but he ſhall overcome at laſt*, Gen. 49. 19. So a Troop of Luſts and a Legion (for they are many) of Temptations have overcome the Spirit, but the *Spirt ſhall overcome them at laſt*. And the Spirit ſhall have that Dominion and Prevalency in the hearts of all Men, that all its Dictates and Motions ſhall be ſo willingly and immediately obeyed and complied withal, that there ſhall be no ſtriving of the Spirit with Man; for he ſhall forthwith and preſently go as that commands him to go, and come as that bids him to come, and do this or that according as the Spirit ſaith, without any ſuch thing as Reaſoning and Perſwaſion, or ſtriving in the Heart, for there will

not

not be the leaſt Reluctancy or Unwillingneſs. God who ſees and knows the things afar off, doth foreſee this alſo; that even Fleſh will become ſo Spiritual, that they ſhall obey all his Commands, and execute his Statutes, without any ſtriving of the Spirit, but only upon the firſt motion and making of it known unto their Hearts.

CHAP. VIII.

Towards the end of Time and in the latter days, All the Inhabitants of the Earth will be turned and brought over unto God. Which will be done and accompliſhed by the Pouring out of the Spirit upon us from on High.

IF it be asked, But when ſhall theſe things be? I Anſwer, Tho there may be ſome tendency and preparation thereto in the mean while, yet we muſt not expect nor look for it abſolutely and fully, *Until the Spirit be poured down upon us from on High*, Iſa. 32. 15. Which ſhall acquaint us with the things of God and of Heaven in a moſt wonderful and plentiful manner, that we ſhall then know them as clearly, diſtinctly and truly as now we do the common things of this Earth, which are now viſible and preſent before us, *My Doctrine ſhall drop as the Rain My Speech ſhall diſtill as the Dew, as the ſmall Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the ſhowers upon the Graſs*, Deut. 32. 2. After that very manner hath the Word and Spirit of the Lord came to the ſeveral Men and Women of the former Generations, by *Droppings* and *Diſtillings* like ſmall Rain, and as the Dew or Showers. But this pouring

pouring forth of the Spirit upon us from on High, will be like great Drops running on continually together, or raining down Bucket fulls at once (as the common proverbial Speech is) *When all the Fountains of the great Deep ſhall be broken up, and the windows of Heaven ſhall be opened*, Gen. 7. 11. In this ſence alſo. So that all the things that are in the Earth or Sea, or in the Hearts of the Children of Men, ſhall be openly diſcloſed and made known: *And the windows of Heaven ſhall be opened*, ſo that we ſhall as clearly ſee and perceive the things there, as now by looking through the Window thereof, we ſee the things that are in ſuch a Room of an Houſe, as when we are in it, and look through the Caſement, we ſee the things in the next adjoining Court: And that it will be all thus made known Univerſally at once, we are given to underſtand by what is Written, *Drop down ye Heavens from above, and let the Skies powr down Righteouſneſs: Let the Earth open and let them bring forth Salvation, and let Righteouſneſs ſpring up together: I the Lord have Created it*, Iſa. 45. 8. God hath made and ordained, that it ſhall be ſo; that the Heavens ſhall drop down the things contained therein. They ſhall be ſo made known unto and had by us, as if they were actually dropped down and next to us. The Earth alſo ſhall open and bring forth the things contained in her; which heretofore lay underneath and hidden. All this ſhall be done together. And it is obſervable how they are all expreſſed by theſe two VVords, *Righteouſneſs* and *Salvation*. By the firſt is ſhewn forth the nature of them as they are fixed and connected together, after the Image of him who Created them, that is, in eternal and immutable Righteouſneſs. And be-

cauſe

cauſe that in the Earth thoſe things are, which now hurt and deſtroy; therefore God *who, cauſeth Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs*, and by his own way of working, *Which is marvellous in our eyes*, will cauſe that both Heavens and Earth *do open and let them.* (It is expreſſed in the Plural Number, and therefore both of them ſhall have an hand and part in it) *As to bring forth Salvation and Righteouſneſs is to ſpring up together with it*; Intimating, that beſides that *Righteouſneſs which the Skies ſhall pour down*, another *Righteouſneſs* ſhall ſpring up together with it. By the Phraſe of *Springing up*, we learn that this will proceed out of the Earth. *Truth ſhall ſpring out of the Earth, and Righteouſneſs ſhall look down from Heaven*, Pſal. 85. 11. That is, both from out of the Hearts of the Inhabitants of the Earth, as alſo from the Element it ſelf. And *Righteouſneſs ſhall look down from Heaven* more clearly and viſibly than ever it hath done yet.

But wherefore is it that we hear ſo very much that in the laſt days of all, *God will pour out his Spirit upon us from on High*, Iſa. 32. 15. *For I will pour Water upon him that is Thirſty and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Off-ſpring*, Iſa 44. 3. *And it ſhall come to paſs afterward* (*in the laſt days ſaith God*, Acts 2. 17.) *that I will pour out out my Spirit upon all Fleſh*, Joel, 2. 28. And there is not altogether ſo much mention made of the *Word* then: For after Jeſus Chriſt who was the Word, and the Word was God, was taken away in his Bodily Preſence from among Men, he ordered that his Diſciples ſhould tarry at *Jeruſalem* until they had received the promiſe of the Father, and were endued

dued with Power from on High. And so in the beginning was the Word, and all things were Created by it that were Made. And during all this, mean while they are *upheld by the word of his Power*. And whilst these Generations pass through here, the *Word is to them all in all, towards the making them a People prepared for the Lord*, and to give them an Inheritance amongst all them which are Sanctified. But at the very ending, Conclusion, and shutting up of all things, The *Spirit* is to do the main and principal Office. But we read not altogether so much of the VVord then as aforetime. Besides that, the VVord is in Order and Succession of Time before the Spirit; for Jesus Christ came first into the Flesh, and then afterward the Holy Ghost was given according to that Emphatical Remark of one of the Inspired VVriters; for the *Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet Glorified*. Another great Reason hereof may be assigned, That as the *Angel sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created Heaven and the things that therein are, and the Earth and the things that therein are, and the Sea and the things which are therein, that there should be Time no longer*, Rev. 10. 16. For Time will be lost and swallow'd up in Eternity, as a River or Brook is now lost when it empties it self into the wide Ocean: So we may easily gather and understand, that when all these things here mentioned, shall be so perfectly and wholly made known and seen face to face; when what is now afar off and Future, shall be Present and just before us; when Faith shall be turned into Vision, and Hope into Fruition, when *Prophesies shall fail, Tongues cease, and Knowledge*

shall

ſhall vaniſh away: VVhen the whole Creation of God ſhall be new and changed from material and ſenſible things, into Spiritual, then we may conclude alſo, That *WORDS ſhall be NO LONGER.* But the things themſelves (heretofore expreſſed and apprehended by them) ſhall ſucceed and be given unto the Creatures. God doth all things *in his own Order*. He firſt made known unto his Creatures the *Words of Eternal Life*, and then afterwards he inveſts them with the thing it ſelf of Eternal Life; and then it is conſequent that the words thereof ſhould ceaſe and fail, as the Scaffold falls down, or is taken away when the Building is Perfected and quite Finiſhed. Like as now in common Life there is great talk of ſuch a Perſon's coming, as of the *Meſſiah* among the Ancient Jews; but when he is come indeed, then all that talk periſheth which did relate thereto. *For ſince the beginning of the World Men have not heard nor perceived by the Ear, neither hath the Eye ſeen, O God beſides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him*, Iſa. 64. 4. But when that great and enduring thing ſhall be actually given to the Creature by that God whom he hath waited for, then all the thoughts of Heart and words of Mouth that were before concerning it, will ceaſe and come to an utter end. VVhat Truth we now ſee written in a dead Letter, or we hear in an outward Airy Sound, or we conceive in our Mind, will one day appear as a ſhining Ray of Light. For *Whatever doth make manifeſt is Light*, Eph. 5. 13. And all things then will appear in the Light of the Lord.

And

And ſo this great Matter which we are contending for all along and perſwading People unto, ſhall be inſtantly and altogether done by the Spirit. So that *Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, ſhall be delivered from the Strivings of the People*, and be *made the Head of the Heathen*, and *a People whom he hath not known ſhall ſerve him. As ſoon as they hear of him, they ſhall Obey him.* So that there is not need of many more words to enforce the Exhortation. But by VVords, Knowledge, or Notice hath been given, that one day ſo it ſhall be; for all things which are written in the Scriptures of Truth muſt be fulfilled. And alſo there is this further benefit and uſe of words, that we are hereby taught and put in mind to be in a Readineſs and Preparation for the ſame. The VVord doth convert Sinners from the Error of their way, like the droppings of Rain, or the diſtillings of Dew; that is, it doth now and then bring in ſome individual Perſons; and that alſo is done by degrees and in ſucceſſion of time. *But the powring out of the Spirit from on High*, ſhall bring them in by ſhoals and multitudes, and do the VVork *Inſtantly* and Immediately. *As ſoon as they hear of me they ſhall Obey me.* Then thou *ſhalt ſee and flow together, and thine Heart ſhall fear and be enlarged, becauſe the abundance of the Sea ſhall be converted unto thee, the Forces of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee. The Multitude of Camels ſhall cover thee. All the Flocks of* Kedar *ſhall be gathered together unto thee. Who are theſe that fly as a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows*, Iſa. 60.5.6,7,8. By all which kinds of Speech we are given to underſtand, that very many in number ſhall flow and come over and be Converted unto God. And

the

the Sons of Strangers ſhall build up thy Walls. This is near to the ſame purport and meaning as what is ſaid in our great Scripture; out of which I have here opened and alledged things all along. The *Strangert ſhall ſubmit themſelves unto thee: The Strangers ſhall fade away, and be afraid out of their cloſe Places.* Thoſe are *Strangers* who before had not known God nor Chriſt. For although known unto God are all Men and Women as they are his Creatures; yet God and Chriſt doth not know them as to be in Covenant with them; *I never knew ye, depart from me ye that work Iniquity,* Matt. 7. 23. But they remain *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, who are without Hope, without God in the World.* And yet here is the aſſured Promiſe, that theſe ſhall come to be acquainted and ſubmit themſelves (that is to yield Obedience) unto God and his Chriſt, according to what he hath afore ſpoken of in another Scripture, *I will ſay to them which were not my People, Thou art my People, and they ſhall ſay, Thou art my God,* Hoſ. 2. 23.

The Strangers ſhall fade away and be afraid out of their cloſe Places. Beſides that abundant Converſion of them at laſt; thoſe which ſhall be converted before they ſhall ſo *fade away* and come off from their former Strangeneſs towards God, as that it ſhall not be perceived: Like Men Aſhamed, which Steal and flee from Battel, ſo they ſhall be aſhamed of their former Ungodlineſs and ſinful doings. So that they would rather ſeem on the contrary as if they had obeyed and ſerved God from the very firſt. When theſe come to be acquainted with, and to believe a future State and condition

tion of Happiness and Misery, they shall look about how to make sure for themselves that they may be happy and sure therein: And they shall be afraid out of their close Places, or of those Imaginations and Deceits in which heretofore they trusted and built a false Hope on. Thou putteſt away all the wicked of the Earth (observe the Particle *All*) *like Dross*, Psal. 119.119. *As wax melteth before the Fire, so let the Wicked perish at the presence of God*, Psal.68. 2. All this will be done more suddenly and as it were at an instant, when the times of *universal Reformation* come on, and God doth *bow the Heavens and come down*, and he *poureth out his Spirit upon all Flesh*; Then all VVickedness will so vanish and disappear, that the place thereof shall know it no more, and it will seem as if there had been never any such thing on the Earth. All that gross Darkness and Error will be utterly and for ever gone off from the face of it, when this true Light shall begin to shine universally and openly in all the habitable parts thereof. *The People shall then shew forth their Zeal for the Lord God of Hosts*; VVho is he that said but so much as in his Heart, Shall the invisible God reign over me? Or shall I obey his standing and written word? Let these People be brought forth, that the Saints of the most High may inflict some Punishment on them. But they shall not do it in the least, *For Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord.* And again, *The Lord shall judge his People*, Heb.10.30. Deut.32.35, 36. And the Lord will not begin to execute it then presently, when he is glorified in his Saints, *and had in Honour by all that are round about him.* As an unknown Malefactor amongst a great multitude

Multitude of People when he is asked for, who did such a Theft or Murther: Which being known and evident, must be concluded that some one did it, he is sure to keep Silence and seem all one as the other innocent People, lest he should be betrayed and discovered. In like manner it will be when the Lord shall Plead with the Inhabitants of the Earth (who will be a vast number gathered together of all Generations and Countries) and he *maketh Inquisition* for so much Sin, Iniquity, Transgression and Wickedness as hath been actually done on the Earth. So much hath been committed, and it must have been by some Persons, Who was it by Name that did it? *Then shall they be exceeding sorrowful and afraid, and begin every one of them to say, Lord, is it I?* The particular Guilty themselves shall keep Silence, and they shall be found *Speechless*, Matt. 22. 12. Or if they are asked as concerning another Matter, then they will perhaps speak out or deny, hereby to wave and take of the suspicion of that also whereof they were indeed Guilty. In that day there will hardly be found any who will own themselves to have been amongst the Enemies and Adversaries of the Lord. *The Adversaries of the Lord shall be ashamed*; which as they shall be then conscious of themselves, so they will endeavour to hide it as much as they can. *But they shall be afraid out of their close Places of shelter and absconding*, whether it be the *Clefts of the Rocks*, or the *Holes of the Mountains.*

tains. For though their Fellow-Creatures would be puzled hereby end be at a loss and difficulty to whom to assign such hidden things of Dishonesty, or many secret acts of Sin and Wickedness. And when even the Persons themselves who committed the same, shall make such a goodly outward shew of having Worshipped, Honoured and served the Lord, and they not knowing the limits of his Mercy, nor the periods of Time of holding forth his Scepter of Grace; nor yet discerning (for the Heart of every one is deep) the reality and sincerity of their Repentance; it is hence impossible that they should either find out or judge Righteously, and render accordingly to the several People. But the Judge of all the Earth will do Right. He is not as Man, but a *God of Knowledge, by whom Actions are weighed,* 1 Som. 2. 3. Who sees Hearts as clearly as we see the outward Faces; and he knows things long since past, or yet to come, as we do the present Moment. In opposition to their Hiding, Concealing and Dissembling, Thine hand shall find out all thine Enemies, *Thy Right hand shall find out those that hate thee; thou shalt make them as a fiery Oven in the time of thine Anger, the Lord shall swallow them up in his Wrath, and the Fire shall devour them,* Psal. 21. 8, He will first find and set them out, and then afterwards take his own time to punish them. According to that Divine Method, *Having a mind to revenge all Disobedience, when your Obedience is fulfilled.* So he will first have that *Seed which shall serve*

ſerve him, It ſhall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation. And when the days of their Obedience and Service are fulfilled, then he will begin to call to account the former Generations: For it is firſt ſaid *Zion ſhall be redeemed with Judgment, and her Converts with Righteouſneſs, and then afterwards it follows, And the deſtruction of the Tranſgreſſors and of the Sinners ſhall be together,* Iſa. 1. 27, 28. *And I will puniſh the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity,* Iſa. 13. 11. But like as it is written, *I will leave a few Men of them from the Sword and from the Peſtilence, that they may declare all their Abominations among the Heathen, whither they come, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord,* Ezek. 12. 16. So here it may be ſuppoſed, that God will have one Righteous Generation after ſo many Rebellious and Sinful ones; that by comparing both thoſe Contraries together (I do here ſpeak after the manner of Men) He may know how to proceed to Recompence, and Puniſhment. We read, that when *God ſaw that the wickedneſs of Man was great in the Earth, it repented the Lord that he had made Man upon the Earth, and it grieved him at his Heart,* Gen. 6. 5, 6. But after that *the Lord ſmelled a ſweet Savour, and the Lord ſaid in his Heart, I will not again curſe the Ground any more for Man's ſake; for the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth; neither will I again ſmite any more every thing Living, as I have done,* Gen. 8. 21. This was ſaid upon *Noah,* (a Righteous and Perfect Man) his building an Altar *unto the Lord*

and offering burnt Offerings on that Altar. So that we see and find that it fares better with the wicked World for the sake of the Righteous. And after the same similitude of things we may conceive, that when the Lord hath been long and sore displeased with the Heathen of former Generations who were at Ease (under which word Heathen are comprised all those who know not, or who obey not the Lord) when the Earth was much corrupted by reason of their Transgression which did sit heavy upon it, so that it became as a Smoak or Stink in his Nostrils. (*When the House of Israel dwelt in their own Land, they defiled it by their Ways and by their doings: Their way was before me as the uncleanness of a Removed Woman,* Ezek. 36. 17. After God hath born with this a long time, then comes and succeeds the *Righteous Generation*, who *build an Altar* and *offer Burnt Offerings on that Altar*, which like Frankincence and Myrrh doth take away all the former Stink that the Lord *doth smell a sweet Savour from them*; wherenpon he doth abate and mitigate somewhat from that intended Punishment which he had before thought to lay and inflict on the wicked World; That he will not stir up all his Wrath, nor yet pour on them all and the utmost Evil, which he had before purposed to have done. Though withal, by seeing the exceeding Goodness of the one, compared with the Exceeding Sinfulness, Evil and Provocation of former Generations, it is necessary that some Punishment and Vengeance be

be actually inflicted on them, *For the day of Vengeance is in mine Heart.* (Hereby is denoted the futurity thereof, and that it is to succeed after the other) *and the Year of my Redeemed is come*, Isa. 63. 4. Which being expressed in the Present Tense, though it is spoken of after the other, yet in order of time, it will be before that; to which agrees the Gospel, And *the Dead in Christ shall rise first*, Thess. 4. 16.

For it is the day of the Lord's Vengeance, and the Year of Recompences for the controversie of Sion, Isa. 34. 8. What is this *controversie of Sion*? It is even the Lord's Controversie with the Inhabitants of the Earth, That all, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, *Heathen*, and all other People, of every Nation, Country and Language, and of every Generation, should obey him the Lord their God. And here it comes to pass that some do Obey him and some do not; from whence it is appositely stiled Recompences in the Plural Number, there being two sorts of them, that is to say, a Recompence of Good to those that shall be found to have Obeyed him, and a Recompence of Evil to such who have not Obeyed him; *For the Lord God of Recompences shall surely requite*, Jer. 51. 56. To all People of every Country, Kindred and time, one of these two ways. So that in short, if People do not Obey God, it is a *Controversie*, which will be decided to their own Misery, as themselves will find in the day of the *Lord's Vengeance*. But if they do obey him (unto which knowing the

of the Lord, we perswade Men) it will be abundantly made up to them in the Resurrection of the Just, in the Year of *Recompences for the controversie of Sion.*

This *Controversie* the Lord hath been pleading with Men and Women by his Word and Spirit; by his *Prophets*, Son *Jesus Christ*, *Apostles*, *Evangelists*, *Pastors* and *Teachers*, *Ministers* and *Servants*, ever since Man was first Created on the Earth. The same lot hath fallen unto me, from the Forty third, Forty fourth and Forty fifth Verses of the Eighteenth Psalm, which I have here endeavoured to Handle Faithfully and Truly according to the Grace and Knowledge, according to the Ability and Measure which the Lord hath given and committed unto me, according to the proportion of Faith, and according to that distribution of Spiritual Qualifications and Endowments which was *allotted*, (and here *I stand in my Lot*, Dan. 12, 13.) to me a single Creature. What I write unto others, I write unto my self also; that I may be found obedient in all those things whereunto I exhort others. And whilst the desire of my Soul is to this, and the same is the endeavour of my Hands, it is a well-grounded hope and assurance, that both my self and my Works may be accepted of the Lord. *If the Lord who hath the residue of the Spirit*, Mal. 2.15. doth stir up others also in like manner as he hath done mine, This may somewhat prepare and make way for the *Universal Reformation of*

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the Lives and Manners of Men. And they *that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as Stars for ever and ever. But thou O* Daniel *ſhut up the Words and ſeal the Book even to the time of the End. Many ſhall run to and fro, and Knowledge ſhall be increaſed,* Dan. 12. 3. 4. So that after all, theſe *Words* alſo may be *ſhut up*, and this *Book may be Sealed* until the appointed time draws near and is actually come, when God will indeed bring the ſame to paſs, even at the time of the End, in the very laſt days and ſhutting up of all.

When Chriſt the Son of *David*, the *root and off-ſpring of David*, the *Bright and Morning Star*, ſhall be delivered from the hands of all his Enemies, and from the *ſtrivings of the People*, when his Enemies ſhall be made his Foot-ſtool, and ſhall be caſt out as the dirt in the Street; when all his Members, Diſciples and Followers ſhall be delivered from the Hand of *Saul.* (See the Title of Pſalm 18.) that is in a Spiritual Signification from the Devil; that like as Chriſt their Head was preſerved from and not overcome by his Temptations, ſo he ſtall ſee the *Travel of his Soul and be ſatisfied*, for in that *himſelf hath ſuffered, being Tempted, he is able to Succour them that are Tempted*, Heb. 2. 18. Whom he doth accordingly ſo Succour and Preſerve in the *hour of Temptation* and in the day of Trial, till at length they become Conquerors, and they are *delivered from the hand of all their Enemies*, and from the hand of the Tempter.

CHAP. IX.

A Paraphrase on some of the most Remarkable Verses of Psalm 18. *Shewing the Design and Connexion of this Psalm. Wherewnto is Sub-joined the shutting up and the Conclusion of this whole Book.*

SO that, in that day the words of this Song may be spoken unto the Lord, *I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength, the Lord is my Rock and my Fortress, and my Deliverer, my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust, my Buckler and the Horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower.* And so they may go on to declare and make a Rehearsal in order of the several great and good things which God hath done in his works of Creation and Redemption, how that from the Forming and Transgression of *Adam* unto *Jesus Christ* being manifested in the Flesh, and from thence to the *Pouring out of the Spirit upon us from on High*, till the very *last days*; it went on all along with Men and Women in all the Habitable parts of the Earth, and throughout all the several Generations, till at last it came to this Blessed upshot, Conclusion and Period, *Thou hast deliver'd me from the Strivings of the People, and thou hast made me the Head of the Heathen.* (By which two Words, *People* and *Heathen*, are comprehended all those who Worship God and who Worship him not; as also both them who Worship him in a true or in a false manner) for when *David* Prays in another Place to *to Visit*

all

all the Heathen, Psal. 59. 5. He includes under that Word, *Heathen*, also those sinful and Wicked Jews whom he there speaks of, and amongst whom he dwelt. Even as there have been all along *Those of the Synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, but are not, but do lie*, Rev. 3. 9. Which say they are Christians and Servants of the Lord, and are not, but do lie; for they are Heathen in Manners tho not in Worship. And such for all their Name of Christian, are not known of Christ, they being workers of *Iniquity*; but many of them shall cease to be such, and then he shall begin to own and know them. When such and all others come to serve him; *When the People are gathered together and the Kingdoms to serve the Lord*, Psal. 102. 22. When that which hath been said will be fulfilled, *A People whom I have not known shall Serve me, I am sought of them that asked not for me, I am found of them that sought me not. I said, Behold me, Behold me, unto a Nation that was not called by my Name*, Isa. 65. 1. And when the Prophet doth afterwards complain, *I have spread out my hands all the day unto a Rebellious People*, He saith the first of the *Gentiles*, but this last and worst Character he gives of the *Jews*. By which is intimated forth and confirmed that old and true Observation, That as good People do commonly meet with more Kindness and Civility from meer Strangers than from Acquaintance and Kinsfolks: So it is a more easie matter to convert and bring over unto God meer Heathen and

and Infidels, than to Reform obstinate Jews, superstitious or formal Christians, from the Error of their ways, and to bring them off from their vain and sinful Customs. So God speaks unto *Ezekiel, Son of Man go get thee unto the House of* Israel, *and speak with my Words unto them, for thou art not sent unto a People of a strange Speech, and of an hard Language, whose Words thou canst not understand; Surely had I sent thee unto them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the House of* Israel *will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me,* Ezek 3. 4, 5, 6, 7. And so God doth elsewhere take notice how they did *Pollute his Name among the Heathen,* which before was Sanctified among them. It is a more easie matter to instruct them in the true Knowledge of God who never heard of him before, then it is to them who have heard him Preached and Talked of all their Lives long, and yet they have not the Knowledge of God. *I speak this to their shame:* For many such are found to be in this Christian Nation, who know nothing more of him than in a general way, what they have heard only with the outward Ear, or they have received in false Notions and Apprehensions concerning him; for in this case so many things must be unlearned again, and so many Errors must be removed out before the Truth can come in; That one who is a pure Man, not before prepossessed with wrong Imaginations, but hath the common Principles of Nature and Powers of Knowledge, when such an one is instructed truly

truly and perfectly in the ways of God, he will forthwith assent unto them, and he will judge it the most reasonable thing in the World to do according to what is written, *At that day shall a Man look to his Maker, and his Eyes shall have respect unto the Holy One of Israel*, Isa. 17. 7. That Mortal Man should be Subject and Obedient unto the Almighty and everlasting God; for a Creature to be Governed by his Creator; especially when he sees, hears and finds it in his Heart to be enforced with that Demonstration and Power as it may be: *As soon as they hear of me they shall Obey me. The Strangers shall submit themselves unto me*: *The Strangers shall fade away and be afraid out of their close Places.* There is a manifold Wisdom of God, and so there is a manifold Sense and Interpretation of his Word, (which yet is all true and genuine) so besides that meaning of the word *Strangers*, before assigned: There may be intended also such as are Jews, Christians, and Servants of God in Name or Profession only; for they are *Strangers or strange Children*, Psal. 144. 7. Who pretend and seem outwardly to own and serve God, when indeed and in truth they do not serve and obey him. Whatever Thoughts, Deceits, or false Imaginations such have in their Minds; they shall fade and come off from them, and they shall be afraid thereof, when the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and of the things pertaining to his Kingdom; all their own Reasonings and Imaginations shall Vanish and be

be utterly Aboliſhed, and every High thing that heretofore exalted it ſelf againſt the Knowledge of God, ſhall be caſt down and fall to the Ground, that the Lord alone may be exalted in that day, and every thought both in Man or Woman will be brought into Captivity unto the Obedience of Chriſt. *As ſoon as they hear of me, they ſhall Obey me.*

The CONCLUSION.

THE Wickedneſs and Rebellion of former Generations did endeavour to Dethrone God and Chriſt. Nay, it did put Chriſt to Death who was the *Prince of Life*, whom God again looſed from the *Pains of Death, it being not poſſible that he ſhould be holden by it, for God raiſed him up.* And the very ſame degree of Rebellion and Wickedneſs, would (if ſuch a thing were poſſible, which was not) with Reverence be it ſpoken, have *Killed God himſelf.* Yea, they would what lay in them, *Ungod* him, from whence they are properly called *Ungodly Men*, for they would not *that God ſhould reign over them.* Hence did ariſe up thoſe *Strivings of the People.* But herein the Heathen *did rage, and the People did imagin a vain thing*: For after all this long Fight and Controverſie with the Inhabitants of the Earth, wherein the Lord did *Fight againſt them with the Sword of his Mouth*; even that *two edged Sword which is called the Word of God*; And theſe Rebels did *again fight with him, with*

with all their Ungodly deeds, which they have Ungodly committed, and with all their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have ſpoken againſt him, Jude 15. Yet after all God hath the better and upper Hand. Though they did as it were Murder his own Divine Majeſty, in putting to Death his Prophets, Son and Servants; God hath raiſed up his Son already, and he will alſo raiſe up all them again, and bring them along with him Alive to Judgment, when *When he will tread down his Enemies in his Anger, and Trample them in his Fury*, Iſa. 63. 3. and *He will ſlay them*, Luke 19. 27. ſerving them as they did his Anointed and his Choſen ones. *Still the Lord liveth, and Bleſſed be my Rock, and let the God of my Salvation be Exalted.* The Pſalmiſt goes on to ſpeak in the Perſon of Chriſt (*who muſt Reign till he hath put all his Enemies under his Feet.*) *It is God that avengeth me and ſubdueth the People under me: He delivereth me from mine Enemies; yea, thou lifteſt me up above thoſe that riſe up againſt me.* Which was eminently fulfilled when thoſe that roſe up againſt him lifted him up upon the Croſs, and afterwards God lifted him up from the Grave wherein they had put him into the higheſt Heavens in his Aſcenſion, and ſitting now at his Right hand, where he is now lifted up infinitely above all his Enemies. Thou haſt delivered me from the *violent Man*, who is as contrary to the *Meekneſs* and *Gentleneſs* of Chriſt as a *Wolf* is to a Lamb. But here God, the *Everlaſting Shepherd, who brought again the Lord*

Jeſus from the Dead, did deliver and reſtore this *Lamb of God* ſafe again from out of their Mouth, after they had taken him and with wicked Hands Crucified him. *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and ſing Praiſe unto thy Name: Great deliverance giveth he to his King* (who in that day in reality and very deed ſhall be King both of the Jews and alſo of the Gentiles, yea, of all the Earth) *and to his Anointed* (which is the very Chriſt) *to David and to his Seed for evermore.* By which laſt word the Son of *David* is included; of whom as concerning the Fleſh, *Chriſt* came, and alſo all the Seed and Children whom the Lord hath given him from the Beginning, from thenceforth and for evermore, in the moſt Univerſal, comprehenſive and extenſive Signification, throughout all the Earth, and to the end of Time, from thenceforth throughout all Eternity. Which is here ſo expreſſed for our Underſtanding and Apprehenſion. For there is no paſſing throughout all Eternity; for into that is an entrance, and in that is a continuance, but no going through any part of what is without Succeſſion of days or ending of time; but like God himſelf the *Ancient of days*, abideth continually the ſame.

And they ſung a new Song, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the Book and open the Seals thereof, for thou waſt ſlain and haſt redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue, and People and Nation. And haſt made us unto our God Kings and Prieſts, and we ſhall Reign on the Earth.

Worthy

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power and Riches and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour and Glory, and Blessing. And every Creature which is in Heaven and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that is in them, heard I saying, Blessing and Honour and Glory and Power be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever, Rev. 5. 9, 10, 12, 13. *After this, I beheld and lo a great Multitude which no Man could number of all Nations and Kindred and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne and before the Lamb, cloathed with white Robes and Palms in their Hands, and cried with a loud Voice saying, Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, Blessing and Glory and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving and Honour and Power, and Might be to our God for ever and ever.* Amen. Rev. 7, 9, 10, 12.

FINIS.

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